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May 25, 1890.

Vol. VI.

Single
Number.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY BEADLE AND ADAMS,
No. 98 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK.

Price,
5 Cents.

No. 148.

SHARP SAM; or, THE ADVENTURES OF A FRIENDLESS BOY.

BY J. ALEXANDER PATTEN

AUTHOR OF "GAMESTER'S DAUGHTER," "SAILOR BEN," "OUR FATHER'S BONES," ETC., ETC.



"ALL I'VE TOLD YOU TO DO. BE SMART, NOW, AN' LEAVE THESE WALLS BEHIND YOU AS QUICK AS YOU CAN. UP WITH YOU."

Sharp Sam;

OR,

The Adventures of a Friendless Boy.

A STORY OF THE GREAT CITY.

BY J. ALEXANDER PATTEN,

AUTHOR OF "GAMESTER'S DAUGHTER," "SAILOR BEN,"
"OUR FATHER'S BONES," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST GREAT CRIME.

At the close of an autumn day the rain fell in torrents in New York.

The streets were flooded, the houses were dripping, and still the torrents and sheets of water descended. Along the gutters, over the curbs and into the sewers, rushed the swelling flood.

Few pedestrians were to be seen, and as the overcrowded horse-cars made their way along, the horses and drivers could hardly see through the thick and driving storm.

It was a dense fall of water, which was caught by the strong north-east wind, and hurled in masses and blinding spray against and upon every object.

He wind itself sighed and howled through the streets and avenues like some terrified spirit of evil, and occasionally tore from its place some high chimney or roof.

The sun had set, and as the night closed in, the dark, lowering clouds which hung over the city, and the uproar of the storm, made the scene additionally desolate and fearful.

At such a time a boy was crouching in the doorway of a dwelling-house.

When every one was, more or less, in a state of apprehension from the severity of the storm, it may well be supposed that a young and friendless boy, driven for shelter to a doorway, might feel some alarm. And yet, young as he was, so rugged had been his path in life, and so many terrors and trials had he already passed through, that, probably, after all, there were many older persons who, even in their homes, were more alarmed than this poor boy.

He shivered with the cold, for both his clothes and blood were thin from poverty, and, as the deluge of rain and furious wind swept by him, he wedged himself into the corner, until the door began to give signs of yielding to the pressure.

The house was in one of the best up-town streets. It was, however, an old-fashioned, dingy-looking structure of brick, which had been built in a long anterior period.

"Jingo," said the boy, "will the rain never stop? I don't mind a storm much—there's nothin' to hurt 'bout me, but a fellow can't make headway in this 'ere one. Besides, there's too many bricks an' other stuff fallin'."

A burst of wind now carried a large quantity of water directly to the doorway, and it fell in a shower on the head of the already wet and shivering boy.

"Look at that now," he cried, between his chattering teeth. "It's like a gutter, or a waterin'-pot, over my head."

He crowded closer, and, as he did so, there came another powerful blast of the wind. Altogether the pressure was more than the door would bear, and, with the noise of the slipping of the lock, which had been, in fact, imperfectly fastened, it suddenly flew open, and the boy fell at full length on his back in the hall.

Hardly understanding what had happened, and thoroughly frightened to find himself inside of the house, he was about to jump up and run away, when his ear caught distinctly the cry of:

"Murder!—murder!"

In a moment there came another scream, but not so loud as the first:

"Murder!—mur—d—e—r!"

The boy was very pale and trembled violently, but a courage which was natural to him was beginning to assert itself. Next he heard a noise on an upper stairs, when he said:

"Some one is comin'. The murderer, no doubt. I'll hide an' git a look at him."

Thus speaking he noiselessly drew back into the hall.

The sound of approaching steps on the stairs came nearer, and directly the figure of a man appeared. As he passed under the hall-light the boy had an opportunity to see his features very distinctly. Hurrying on he exclaimed:

"Home of my youth, farewell!"

Striking his brow with his clenched hand he uttered a groan of intense agony and then rushed across the threshold into the street and raging storm.

"This is tragedy, no mistake," muttered the boy. "Where am I, and what's been done up-stairs? I've no 'gagement this evenin', and I'll play detective for awhile."

First closing the front door, the boy began ascending the stairs very cautiously, and, now that he had undertaken the adventure, was not a little frightened again. Not a sound was to be heard, except the noise of the storm without. The first hall that he came to was perfectly dark, but at the end of it he noticed a ray of light coming through the crevice of a door.

"It's a lonely crib, anyhow," he whispered. "Perhaps I'll get into trouble. Well, it's all the same to a hungry, friendless boy like me. Anythin' for excitement."

He walked slowly but boldly toward the light. He then stood for a moment at the door listening and trying to peer into the room. There was no sound, and he could not see anything except the wall and

some doors. Pushing the door a little, he put in his head and quickly withdrew it.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "There has been a murder. I'll go and tell the police that there is a woman all covered with blood in this 'ere very room."

He dashed off and down the stairs, but, to his astonishment, at the foot of the last flight ran directly into the grasp of a policeman.

"You young thief," exclaimed the policeman, "I've caught you slick enough. When I found the door open I knew that some of you villains had got inside."

The front door had been again blown open by the wind.

"I haven't stolen a cent's worth," replied the boy. "But there's a murdered woman up-stairs."

"A murdered woman," repeated the policeman, in astonishment, and making his grip on the boy more secure. "Crime's increasing indeed, when a boy like you can murder a woman. I'll rap for assistance."

"I didn't do it," exclaimed the boy, in terror.

"Tell that to the coroner's jury, and the grand jury, and the petty jury, and they may believe you, if they are fools, but, as for me, I'm too well acquainted with the dangerous classes to believe a word of it. Bedad! this arrest will be a feather in my cap at head-quarters."

Dragging the frightened and almost fainting boy to the sidewalk he rapped for assistance which soon came.

Sure enough the body of a murdered woman was found in the back second-story room, with no other person in the house except the boy, who had been arrested in seeming flight on the stairs. He was taken to the station-house, and the journals of the next day gave most exhaustive and thrilling accounts of the mysterious murder supposed to have been perpetrated by a boy who called himself "Sharp Sam."

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERVIEW AND ITS TERRIBLE RESULT.

The real murderer had fled through the streets. The storm beat upon him, but he heeded it not. Within his own bosom was a tempest of anguish, a frenzy of self-accusation, and an agony of remorse, which together benumbed him to all else.

Guilt—the guilt of blood—was upon him, and he now felt it, as Cain did when he went forth a vagabond upon the face of the earth.

The history of this man was both strange and sad.

Henry Beekman had the blood of one of the oldest and best families of New York. His father was born in wealth, educated at Columbia College, and then sent abroad for the additional culture of foreign travel and society. On his return, it was expected that he would make a distinguished marriage, but it so happened that on the voyage home he became acquainted with a young lady passenger, with whom he fell desperately in love.

So rash was he, in view of his future prospects, that he secretly married this lady a few days after his arrival. Dependent upon his father, however, the secret had soon to be told, when there was an exciting scene, and he was subsequently disinherited.

His wife and himself then undertook to support themselves by teaching, and painting and sketching as artists. A male child was born to them. Then came misfortune after misfortune, and, at length, wearied with the struggle, they committed suicide by inhaling the fumes of charcoal. When they were found the infant was still alive, and, after great difficulty, it was restored to consciousness.

Now the father relented, and received the grandson into his household. This child was the Henry Beekman of our story. He grew up the image of his father, and with marked intelligence and talents.

As both boy and man he was noted for his impulsive and passionate disposition. Kind-hearted and reasonable at other times, he would quickly lose control of himself, and say and do things which caused him much subsequent regret.

In a moment of sudden quarrel, after he had reached manhood, he wounded a gentleman of the city, and, as a result, left the country. He wandered in different parts of the world, a reckless and abandoned man, and only a few days before the opening of our tale had returned to New York.

On the afternoon of the storm he had sought the old mansion. His purpose was to obtain money. Much to his surprise, he found that his grandfather and grandmother were both dead, and that the only occupant of the residence was an aged aunt of his father's, who had inherited most of the property.

She was an eccentric and miserly person, and lived alone, having a woman to visit the house daily to do some of the necessary work. She had always hated Henry Beekman, and regarded him as one of the worst of men.

As she sat in her room on this afternoon, clad in old and patched garments, though she had closets full of the finest silk and other dresses, she was startled by the ringing of the door-bell. It was so unusual for her to have visitors that she went down to the door with considerable trepidation. When she was informed of the name of the person she instantly sought to close the door, and exclaimed:

"Mercy on me! Go away."

But Henry Beekman was in no mood to be treated in this manner, and so, with a little force, he pushed open the door and entered.

"Well," he said, "after years of absence, this is not a very hospitable welcome to the house of one's grandfather."

"Your grandfather and grandmother, and many more of the name," replied the old woman, as she stood the picture of fright and dismay, "are dead."

"Dead!" repeated the man.

"Your grandfather and grandmother had nothing more to live for," said the other, somewhat recovering herself, with the prospect of giving a long contemplated piece of her mind to the person before her. "Your father disgraced them, and you—you, sir—have put a stain on the family name forever."

The man winced and turned red, but he controlled himself, and calmly remarked:

"As an heir, I wish to inquire what my share of the property is?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the old lady. "I will tell you. Not one cent. Ha, ha, ha!"

Disregarding her laughter and scorn, Beekman again asked:

"Who did inherit my grandfather's wealth?"

"I did, or, at least, the most of it."

The old lady drew herself up, proudly, and looked with an intense glare of malice and triumph upon her questioner.

Little did she know what was passing in the mind of the man. Quickly he had resolved upon a plan, and he had the nerve to execute it, though it was a desperate and bloody one.

"Will you not invite me to a room where I can talk with you further, after my long absence, and await the cessation of the storm?" asked Beekman, in a most polite manner.

Now, the spirit of a fiend was uppermost in the woman, and she felt no objection to prolonging an interview which was really a source of pleasure to her.

"Yes," she replied; "you can walk up to my sitting-room. I suppose you will not come soon, again, and there are some matters you may like to hear."

She dropped a low courtesy, and with an undisguised smile of malicious joy, pointed to the stairs.

"You are very kind," said Beekman, with a profound bow. "The heir of this mansion cannot, of course, forget that it was once famed for its hospitality and politeness."

As he thus spoke, he looked as if he felt coursing through his veins the proud blood of his ancestors. As he ascended the stairs his countenance had totally changed. It became scowling and vindictive—it spoke of deeply aroused feelings, and of a torrent of passion ready to burst forth.

"Old fiend!" he muttered; "your moments are short. You expect to torture me further, do you? Your malice has outrun your reason."

We have said that the original purpose of Beekman in coming to this house was to obtain money from his relations. In the altered condition of affairs, he saw that if he got any, it must be by the robbery of the old lady. This he had already determined upon, and, furthermore, that even murder should not prevent him from accomplishing his plan.

When the room was reached, the old lady, with the same air of mock politeness, invited him to be seated. Instead of doing this, he suddenly closed the door and locked it.

"What do you mean by locking the door?" demanded the old lady, pale with fear.

"Simply this," said Beekman, with perfect calmness. "You have insulted me, and brought me up here to continue it. You think I am a bad man, but, old woman, you do not know how much of a devil I am, or you would not have brought me to this room."

"Go," cried the old lady; "go at once! I will not say anything more."

"Silence, and hear me!" commanded Beekman. "I know you of old. You are not only rich, but miserly. These drawers and boxes here are full of money. I am in want of some. Give it to me, and I will go forever."

"Then you are a robber," screamed the old woman. "I'll call the police."

She made a spring toward the window, but with one blow, Beekman felled her to the floor.

After this, he was a madman. His passion, long held in check, asserted itself, and he thought of nothing but vengeance on his tormentor, and the accomplishment of his purpose.

He caught her up and threw her upon the bed. Then his hands grasped her neck, and he not only choked her, but beat her head violently against the bedstead. After a few outcries all was over.

"She is dead," he said, almost out of breath.

"Now for some of her money."

The first bureau drawer that he opened was full of money. There was a most astonishing hoard of gold and silver in boxes and bags, and bank-bills in bundles. He filled his pockets and bosom, and then he fled from the room, down the stairs and into the street. When some distance from the house, he said to himself, to quiet his disturbed feelings:

"At all events no human eye could have seen me."

CHAPTER III.

SHARP SAM IN THE TOMBS.

"In the Tombs," said Sharp Sam, as one of the keepers ushered him into a cell in that famous prison. "I'm disgraced."

"It's not often we're honored with so little a fellow charged with so big a crime," said the keeper.

"It's a mistake."

"Every one that's here says the same."

"I'm bound to git out," cried the boy, as he looked about the small white-washed cell.

"There's no ball for murder," replied the man;

"and I'm thinking you'll have to be contented here for some time. You'll be well treated enough, especially as you will rank with the big criminals."

Thus speaking he closed the inside door of the cell, and left the boy to his reflections.

Sharp Sam had led a hard life, but he had never been in a prison. He was sharp, and he had attained his living rather by chance than any regular work, but he had never been a thief. Consequently, he was not a little shocked and stunned when he realized that he was the inmate of a cell in the Tombs.

Tears started to his eyes, and going to the heavy iron door he tried to shake it.

"Let me out!" he cried. "Let me out!"

He looked up and around him, still crying. Everywhere he saw the high, smooth, whitewashed wall, except in one part, a narrow space through which the light was admitted. In a corner was an iron bedstead, and on this he finally threw himself, sobbing most bitterly.

Though a wail and so poor he had never experienced such wretchedness of heart before. With his freedom he was ready to meet fate as it might come, but now a prisoner, charged with a grave crime, he realized his utter friendlessness and danger. His troubles soon exhausted him, and he fell into a deep sleep.

Some time later the bolts of the door were turned back, and it was opened. Then the same turnkey who had locked up Sharp Sam placed a man in the cell and turned his key upon both of them.

This prison is constantly so crowded that two prisoners and sometimes more are placed in each cell. There is no classification, except a criminal one of putting persons charged with the highest offenses together, and consequently there is no greater school of vice than the Tombs itself.

The male and female prisons stand in a yard, which is surrounded on three sides by walls, and on one by a building which contains court-rooms. These prisons were built many years since, and are defective in regard to both sewerage and ventilation. The cells are built tier upon tier, in the walls, and are reached by iron stairways and connecting corridors. Standing at the small door when you enter you can look all over the prison. At certain hours the long narrow galleries are crowded with the prisoners and friends who are visiting them. Some walk about, generally smoking, and some hang over the railings, gloomily watching the scene. When they are looked up no one is seen in the corridors except the keepers, who at all times have stations at certain points on them favorable for a view of both the corridors and cells. When the food is brought each man must be ready at his cell door to receive it. Or if he has money he can receive from any restaurant "everything that the market affords."

As the Tombs is a prison for those awaiting indictment or trial, you see there not only the most desperate villains but those of the more respectable classes who may have been charged with criminal offenses and not been able to obtain bail. But, after a few days of the associations of the prison, the so-called respectable man has the same sneaking, sinister appearance as the rest.

"Murder! murder!" was the ringing cry of Sharp Sam, in his sleep on the prison bed.

"Poor little kid," said the other prisoner. "He has had dreams."

"I'd know him," muttered the boy.

"Of course you would," said the man, smiling, "particularly if you kept your eyes shut."

Sam awoke at the moment and started up, saying: "Mister, are you the keeper?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the man. "No, my little kid, I ain't the keeper, but I'm one of the kept. Wake up, and tell me who you are."

"I'm Sharp Sam," returned the boy, still rubbing his eyes.

"Ah!" said the other, with a deep breath. "I've read of you. You're in for murderin' an old woman. I'm Tall Mike, and the charge ag'in me is burglary. Let's be friends. Who's your counsel?"

"I ain't got no counsel."

"It's time you had. Why, the coroner's jury has found ag'in you already. I read it myself in the paper, and the last thing you know they'll indict you, try you, and hang you in the yard outside."

The boy jumped from the bed, with his eyes almost starting from their sockets, and demanded: "What for? I didn't do nothin'!"

"You didn't, hey?" said the man, with a severe look. "I know you're young for murder, but the city boys are awful smart and bad, nowadays. So you thought you'd steal a little—do a little in my way—and you—look her precious life."

These last words he hissed in a whisper in Sam's ear.

"No, I didn't," returned the boy, "but I saw a man run away."

"You're Sharp Sam, sure enough," said the man. "I see you have manufactured a defense already. Tell me your story."

Sam then faithfully related all he knew about the murder. When he had concluded, the man said:

"It's a clever story, but it won't do. You're bound to hang, I think."

"I'll escape."

"How?"

Poor Sam had no answer to this question. His heart was in his throat when he glanced upon the thick walls and the iron doors.

"Men," said the prisoner, in low and deliberate words, "don't often get out of these strong prisons, but I know a way for a small boy like yourself to get out."

"Oh, thank you, mister," said Sam, crying again, but now with joy. "How can I get out?"

"Talk low," returned the man; "walls have ears. Do you see that slit of a window up there?"

"Yes," said Sam, "but that is too narrow."

"With a prison on one side and liberty on the other, a man has gone through a window like that," replied Tall Mike.

"Then I can do it, like rollin' off a log," cried Sam, as his naturally buoyant spirits began to return to him.

"Well, it must be near grub time," said Pale Mike, "an' we'd better quiet down. I like you, and I'll help you all I can."

"Bully!" cried Sam.

To further express his changed feelings, he began whistling a merry tune. Such are the quick revolutions of the childish heart.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ACCIDENT AT THE REVIEW.

"What a splendid-looking man!"

"Which one, Flora?"

"Why, that one with the dark curly hair. Don't you see him, Sallie? He's looking straight at us."

These were the remarks made by two young girls who had places on the reviewing stand near the Fifth Avenue Hotel, on an afternoon when the autumn review of the First Division of the National Guard was to take place. The person to whom they alluded was Mr. Henry Beekman, who, attired in faultless fashion, occupied one of the windows of a neighboring club-house.

Broadway, Madison square and Fifth avenue were crowded with people, and the sound of the bands of the gathering military was heard in all directions. It was to be a gala afternoon. The Governor of the State was to review the troops, and, as the day was fine, the people of all classes had turned out in great numbers. The windows and balconies of the hotels, and other buildings, were crowded with finely-dressed ladies, children and gentlemen.

As was usual on such occasions, a temporary platform had been erected in front of the Worth Monument, where the Governor and staff, after passing the lines on horseback, were to witness the marching. Military officers, city officials, and other distinguished persons, with their families, were admitted to the platform by ticket.

There was a long delay, as is always the case. But the happy, and somewhat giddy, young ladies before named, did not mind it. The splendid and animated scene, as they could view it from their unusual position, filled them with delight. Drawn away as their attention was from time to time, they did not forget the handsome man in the club-house window, and cast shy glances that way very frequently.

"He stands as still as a statue," said Sallie.

"Yes, a perfect Apollo," replied Flora, with enthusiasm.

"I wonder who he is? Some English lord perhaps."

"I don't think so, Sallie. I'm sure he is an American."

"We'll never know, Flora. How sad."

Now the strains of music grew louder and nearer, and there was a movement everywhere among the people that gave evidence that, at last, the troops were approaching. As far as the vision could extend up Fifth avenue, which was a long distance, the companies, and regiments, and brigades could be seen wheeling into line. Nodding plumes of gay hues, uniforms of many colors, masses of cavalry, long lines of artillery, and thousands of infantrymen. On they came—while from every window, every stoop, and every other place of observation, the gazing people waved pocket-handkerchiefs, clapped their hands and cheered.

When the Governor had taken the proper position, the marching review began.

The crowd was very dense at the platform. With the exception of the space occupied by the military, all the street, close up to the buildings, was a packed and restless mass of people. The police were numerous on foot, and some were mounted, but they had great difficulty in keeping the lines unbroken.

The whole air was filled with the commingled sounds of music, the roar of the exclamations of the people, and the clatter of horses and tramp of men.

"I'm half afraid," said more than one lady on the platform.

"I don't think this platform is very strong," remarked Sallie. "I wish I was down on the pavement again."

By this time all the military had passed, and there was a sudden movement on the platform, and in the square and streets. To add to the confusion, an officer's horse became restive, and finally unmanageable.

The animal reared, plunged and kicked, suddenly wheeling and throwing the officer. Then he dashed off in the direction of the platform, while the police and others tried to catch him, and hundreds of men, women and children ran hither and thither in affright.

On the platform the commotion was truly alarming.

"Don't crowd," implored the gentlemen.

"We'll break through," cried a lady.

"That railing won't stand such pushing," said another.

The number admitted to the platform was so large that it was overcrowded, and consequently, however much the people now understood their danger, and sought to exercise caution, it was impossible to prevent pressure and panic.

"Oh, dear!" cried Sallie, who was near the railing, "they will surely push us off."

There was a surge of the crowd, and then a sharp noise of breaking wood, and the railing gave way.

One clung to another, and there was a wild alarm, but only one person fell. This was Sallie, whose dress was caught in the railing as it was torn from its fastenings.

As she fell, she screamed, and then became unconscious. But not the slightest harm came to her. Provisionally a gentleman stood on the very spot where she would have fallen, and he gallantly received and supported her. Finding that she had fainted, he instantly bore her to a drug-store on the opposite side of the street. Here she was soon revived, but almost fainted a second time, when she discovered before her the gentleman of the club-house window.

"You have had," he said, addressing her with

great politeness and sympathy, "a narrow escape. Fortunately I was on the spot to catch you. Permit me to hand you my card. I will immediately order a carriage, so that you may return to your home."

There were such contending emotions in the heart of the young lady that she was obliged to look rather than to speak her thanks. Her friend, Flora, by this time had found her way to the store, and she also joined in her thanks, and informed the gentleman of the names and addresses of both. After entering the carriage at the door, Sallie turned to him, and said:

"Be sure and call. My parents must thank you." While he was giving his reply, the carriage rolled away.

"What luck!" said Beekman, as he looked after the carriage. "I'll follow up this chance acquaintance. It may involve me in more crime, but I see a nice opportunity to rake in some money."

CHAPTER V.

SHARP SAM'S HOME.

GREAT had been the consternation and excitement in a front room on the top floor of a miserable tenement house in Cherry street, on the morning of the publication of the particulars of the murder of Mrs. Beekman.

A ragged boy rushed into the room, out of breath and with a flushed face, exclaiming:

"Mother, Sharp Sam has gone an' murdered a woman. It's all in the papers."

"None of your lying," replied a woman, who was busy over a stove.

"It's the truth—the solemn truth," retorted the boy, in a disturbed and angry way. "Why, he's been 'rested an' locked up. The man at the apple-stand read the full 'count to me."

At this juncture another boy rushed in, equally excited, with a paper in his hand.

"Mother! mother!" he cried. "I wouldn't sell this 'ere paper. It's got all 'bout Sharp Sam. Look for yerself."

The woman hastily caught hold of the paper, and the staring head-lines were enough to confirm the information. She read for a few moments, and then exclaimed:

"Well—well, that beats me."

"Was he robbin' her?" asked one of the boys.

"Does it say he cut her throat?" inquired the other, with great interest.

"Well, I say it's all a lie," said the woman, throwing down the paper, and putting her hands on her hips.

"What's all the fuss 'bout, then?" demanded the oldest boy. "I never saw the people so quick to buy papers. I could have sold fifty more."

"I never will believe it—never—never," said Mrs. Miller, which was the name of the woman, as she took the corner of her apron and wiped her moistened eyes.

"I'll be sorry if they hang him," remarked the other boy. "Will we have to go and see 'em do it?"

"Hush such talk," cried Mrs. Miller.

"I'm sorry for Sam," said the oldest boy. "Why, he's lived with us a good while."

"Who is Sam, anyway?" asked the youngest boy, abruptly.

"I don't know—I wish I did," said Mrs. Miller.

"He's a poor boy, like me, but I've forgotten how he come to be livin' with us," said the youngest son, looking inquiringly at his mother.

"Well, I'll tell you," returned Mrs. Miller. "Let me see, it's sixteen years ago that one cold night I was going along by the Catherine Market, when I heard some one crying. It was very dark, and the wind was blowing strong from the north, and I did not like to stop, but somehow I couldn't get a step further, and stopped right there. Then I heard the cry again, off by the side of the Market. So I went up there, and crouching among some oyster shells and barrels, I found a poor, shivering, crying boy. I asked him who he was, and he said he didn't know. I asked him who put him there, and he said a bad man. I raised him up and put part of my shawl around him, and brought him home. I was a poor woman, and had two children of my own, but, thank God, I had a warm heart in my bosom."

By this time Mrs. Miller and both of the boys were in tears.

"Who named him Sharp Sam?" asked the youngest boy.

"He never could tell anything about himself," continued Mrs. Miller. "All that he could remember was confused, and I do not know any more about him than I did the first night he came under my roof. Having no other name I called him Sam, and, after he grew older he was so shrewd that he finally got the name of Sharp Sam."

"He's been a good boy—he did not swear or chew," said the oldest son.

"I've always been poor, boys," said Mrs. Miller, as her eyes again filled with tears. "We've had to rough it, and sometimes to go hungry. But Sharp Sam has always tried to cheer me, and he has earned many a penny and dollar for me. He has been kind to you, too, boys."

"Any time he'd give me half his grub," said the oldest boy.

"Didn't he sell his shoes last winter when we had no money for bread?" added the youngest.

All were in tears again.

"Can't somebody get him out of prison?" asked the oldest boy, desperately.

"No," replied Mrs. Miller, mournfully.

"What can we do?" asked the same boy.

"Very little—because we are poor. The rich can do almost whatever they please," answered Mrs. Miller.

"The rich live up-town," said the youngest boy, musingly. "I don't see them in Cherry street."

Late in the day Mrs. Miller determined to go to the

station-house, where Sam was then detained, and make an effort to see and comfort him. The result of it was that she was not allowed to see him, and she was herself held as a prisoner for some hours, until the officers became satisfied that she had no knowledge of the murder.

She next saw Sharp Sam in a very unexpected manner.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ARISTOCRATIC SCAMP.

STRANGE good fortune is sometimes the lot of evil-doers. It is often a mystery and discouragement to those who live uprightly.

Henry Beekman had been thus fortunate in several respects since he came to New York. He had secured a large sum of money, and, though he had committed a murder, no suspicion could attach to him. He was a stranger in the city, under an assumed name, and no one knew him as connected with the Beekman family. To his surprise a boy had been arrested for the crime, and, while it was evident from the boy's statement that he had witnessed the flight from the house, still he could give no further information.

With certain forged letters of introduction which Beekman held, he had obtained admittance to the clubs, and was recognized as an acquaintance by some of the first gentlemen of the city.

The man had two distinct characters, and he was a perfect master in either of them.

He could appear the finished gentleman, with learned conversation, and the manners of society and travel.

At other times he was simply the cool, reckless villain ready with all the arts of crime.

He had hours of the most bitter anguish, when he scorned himself, and trembled for his future.

At other times he took pleasure in plotting villainy, and was conscienceless and merciless.

At the clubs he was known as Edward Clark, an English gentleman of fortune.

He had magnificent bachelor apartments on the second floor of a house on Fifth avenue. Here we find him, just after he had finished a late breakfast. The rooms were furnished with great taste and expense. The windows were hung with silk and lace curtains, the walls with costly pictures, and every article of furniture was striking for its richness and taste.

"To-day," said Clark, as we will call him for the present, "I must make my call at Miss Sallie Worden's."

He picked his teeth, and looked admiringly about the room for a moment.

"By the way," he musingly continued, "that rescue of Miss Sallie was a romantic and funny affair. I went over toward the platform because I saw that these very girls were observing me in the window. I'm not backward when a pretty girl wants to flirt with me, but hang me if I expected such good luck as for one to fall right into my arms."

He smiled, and seemed very happy. Then his face clouded, and he remarked, in a very low tone:

"I'm walking on the verge of a precipice, as I am now situated in New York. When I have spent in extravagant living all I got of that old woman's money, what then? These club men are wonderful quick-sighted, and quick-scented to run you down as an impostor as soon as the money begins to run low. I know them well. In many lands I've been first petted and then kicked by them."

His face grew dark, as if unpleasant recollections were passing through his mind.

Rising to his feet, he walked hastily two or three times across the apartment, with a noiseless tread on the soft carpet.

"I must follow up my adventure with this young lady," he said. "It is a pity, though, to deceive one so innocent and fair."

He walked faster for a moment, and then, with an outburst of feeling, exclaimed:

"Who have I ever spared? No one. Beauty and age have all suffered at my ruthless hands. But I must not—I will not look back. On I must go along the road of life—on through struggles and crimes to the end of my destiny."

He was deeply moved and wept.

It was for only a few moments, though.

"This won't do," he said, somewhat angrily. "A man who lives as I do can't keep recollection and conscience quiet all the time, but I'm too tender by all odds this morning."

There was a tap on the door.

"Come in," he said.

A great change instantly took place in Clark. The sad, troubled expression passed from his countenance, and he looked smiling, resolute, and self-possessed.

A servant entered, and handed him a card, at which he glanced, and said:

"Show the gentleman up."

"It is Bill Jacobs," he continued, as the servant left the room. "A deep and cunning villain, as I have already discovered."

The door again opened, and a man entered. He was of large size, with very black hair and eyes. His dress was flashy in the extreme. Clark had made his acquaintance at a gambling-house.

The two shook hands, although there was a certain degree of dignity on the part of Clark, as if he did not admit his equality with the man, notwithstanding that he was a visitor in his apartments.

"Well," said Clark, throwing himself into a luxurious chair, close to the side of Jacobs, "what news have you?"

"The very best," returned the man, stroking his beard. "I think there's a chance for a big haul of money."

"Who is Sallie Worden's father? Have you found out, as I asked you to?"

"Yes, all about him. He is a millionaire, and dotes on his daughter."

"That suits to a dot," cried Clark, slapping his knee with his hand.

"Play your points well," said the other, with a confidential look, "and every one of us can get all we want from the old man."

"What is your plan?"

"Abduct the girl."

"That will require great courage and skill. Can't something less dangerous be thought of?"

"No; it is the best plan. We want a great deal of money, and that will bring it."

"What will I have to do?"

"Make love to her, and get her into the street, where some of my gang can seize her."

The servant now handed in a letter, saying:

"This letter was left at the door by a private servant."

Clark received it and, after hastily reading it, said:

"All goes well. Mr. Worden writes to say that he would have called upon me to thank me for saving his daughter, but he has been detained at home by an attack of the gout. All these rich old fellows have the gout, ha, ha! He wants me to call, so that he can thank me, and place himself at my command. What do you think of that, Jacobs?"

"I think the whole thing will work splendid," replied the man, with a sinister smile. "You can do the genteel part, and my boys will do the rough work."

"She is lovely," cried Clark, "and I'm sorry for her, but the necessity for plenty of money on the part of a fast young man in New York knows no law. Does it, Jacobs?"

Rubbing his big hands and smiling, Jacobs answered in the affirmative. Then they parted to meet at the gambling-house to arrange further about the abduction.

CHAPTER VII.

SHARP SAM AND THE BURGLAR.

THE two inmates of the cell in the Tombs had been, after their own methods, studying the character of each other.

Tall Mike was a notorious man, who had lived a life of crime, but his intelligence was much above the average of his class. He quickly saw that Sharp Sam was no ordinary boy, but bright and shrewd beyond his years. Hence he had formed a plan to make him of service to the gang of criminals to which he belonged.

On the other hand, Sharp Sam, while he did not give as much deliberation to the subject as the other, had been quietly weighing the characteristics of his older companion. It should be remembered that Sam was not a bad boy, morally, and he did not feel at all at ease in the society of such a man as Tall Mike; but he was sharp enough to see that he must in no measure offend him, if he expected assistance in the effort to escape.

Hence it became a test of shrewdness on the part of the two, and Tall Mike soon found that the boy was not much his inferior in this respect.

"How many crimes have you committed before this present charge?" asked Tall Mike, in a careless way.

"I've never committed any crime," replied Sharp Sam. "I've lived poor, but never wronged anybody."

"You're a sharp 'un—yes, you are. Well, I don't blame you. When you've got a good yarn, stick to it. Now, the first thing you know some of the newspaper reporters, who have been interviewin' you, or some of these soft-hearted preachers and missionary women who visit the prison, will git up a stir of public sympathy for you. I say you're a sharp one. Ha, ha!"

Tall Mike laughed and chuckled as if the very idea of Sam's deception was most agreeable to him, but that he saw through it completely.

"I have known of cases," he continued, "where these good-hearted people have prayed an' wept an' got up stunnin' petitions for chaps who'd have murdered 'em for 'most nothin'. Your dodge is a good one—play it all you know how."

"But you said I could git out," said Sam, wishing to change the conversation without disputing any more about his own guilt.

"So I did."

"When, do you think?"

"Can't say. There's a good many things to be done. Before you go I want to tell you about my pals outside. You can go to 'em an' they'll stand your friend, an' teach you a lot of things."

A flood of light broke upon Sam. He now comprehended that Tall Mike had an ulterior object in regard to him, and that this was really the reason of his friendliness.

"My pals," the burglar went on to say, "are men of high degree. 'Most all of 'em have served their terms up the river, an' any of 'em can do big jobs. You'll like 'em—I know you will. Several are quite young fellers—boys we took as 'prentices—taught 'em the profession, an' made 'em first-class cracksmen."

Sam listened with much interest. He began more and more to realize what sort of man he had for a companion, and something like fear entered his bosom as he looked upon the self-confessed criminal.

Tall Mike was not an attractive man in his appearance. He was tall, broad-shouldered, and evidently of great strength. His head was perfectly round, with ugly, irregular features of most sinister and cruel expression. Then his short, coarse hair was of a dirty red, and his little watchful eyes were of a green shade like a cat's. All his bones were big, and all his movements were clumsy.

Now, when you come to place this man in a cell

with the strong walls and bolts between him and the society against which he carried on a constant war, it seemed that this was a case of "the right man in the right place."

"Don't you think you would like to jine the gang?" asked Tall Mike.

"Where do they hold out?"

"Sometimes one place an' then another. When the cops run us too close we scatter, but we've got a den. No man who has not taken the death-oath has ever entered it."

"The death-oath—what's that?" asked the boy, with staring eyes.

"To kill an' be killed for treachery. When you once jine there's no backin' out—no blabbin'. If you do then it's all up with you. Death comes swift an' sure."

"Do you kill one another?"

"We take a solemn oath, an' if it ain't kept the man must take the consequences. That's all there is about it."

"Would I have to take an oath?"

"Not at first. You'd wait until you had been some time in your 'prenticeship. Till they saw how you improved, took to the profession. Some boys, an' even men, haven't courage enough. Ah, my boy, I can tell you it takes a bold, brave man to be a first-class cracksmen."

As he thus spoke, Tall Mike looked about the cell, as if he wished to find a mirror in which to survey himself, as the best possible impersonation of the individual of which he spoke.

"After a while," said Tall Mike, resuming, "when you are put in some big job—to rob a bank, for instance—then you'd have to take an oath."

"Do you rob banks?" asked Sam.

"Do we? Why, the whole country is in dread of us. You see we've got brains, money, an' numbers. We plan big things, an' we work for months an' years to carry out our plans. Some get nabbed, like me. But then there are regular lawyers, paid by the gang, an' no man ever goes up the river, till there's nothin' can save him. After that, when he is in the State prison, he is still looked after, an' if there's any chance for him to escape, there's money an' men to help him."

Sharp Sam listened in amazement. He had always supposed that any policeman was sufficient to scare the life out of a thief, but, from the recital of Tall Mike, it seemed that the robbers were as powerful as anybody.

"I've made you open your eyes," said Tall Mike, as the boy stood mute with astonishment. "Well you may. I wouldn't have told you, but I see you're a smart boy, an' I think you'll like to jine."

At this moment there was a noise at the door, and Reg, the keeper, appeared, who said:

"A lady wants to talk with you, Tall Mike."

"A missionary, I'll bet," said the burglar, looking through the wicket of the door. "Ma'am, at your service."

"I wish," remarked a demure little woman, in a soft voice, to leave you a few tracts for the good of your soul."

"Thank you, ma'am, but let me call your attention to the boy in the corner over there. For his size an' years, he is the champion villain of the whole world."

"What has the poor child been doing?" asked the lady, with tears starting to her eyes.

"Child in years, but old in sin, ma'am," returned Tall Mike, dolefully, and with a malicious twinkle in his little eyes. "He's the boy who has frightened the whole city by the murdering of a respectable old lady up-town."

"Oh, dear," cried the tract distributor, "is that the boy the papers have published so much about? His crime is a terrible one."

"I'm afraid he'll have to swing, ma'am. But I'll see that he reads your nice tracts, not needin' 'em myself."

With a half-smile and scowl, Tall Mike abruptly retired from the window.

"Here's some papers to light my pipe with," he said, as he stuffed the tracts into his pocket. "Now, Sam, I'll plan out an escape for you that will set all New York a-talkin'."

CHAPTER VIII.

DRINKING SATAN'S HEALTH.

EDWARD CLARK set forth on his visit to the Worden mansion. As he walked up Fifth avenue he certainly presented a most attractive appearance.

He was slightly above the medium height, erect, and perfectly easy and graceful in his manners and movements. His head was finely shaped, and his face was handsome and intellectual.

Then his dress was faultless in every respect. Without being a coxcomb, he had great taste and fastidiousness about his garments, and, when he set himself to the task, he was sure to appear in such tastefulness and splendor that he made captives of the fair sex, while his own both admired and envied him.

Fifth avenue was at its gayest and most fashionable hour. The sidewalks on both sides were crowded with elegantly-dressed persons. Velvets and silks trailed upon the pavements, and dazzling beauties tripped along in the happiness of wealth.

Carriages of every kind filled the street from curb to curb, most of them going toward the Central Park. There were heavy family carriages, drawn by large and magnificent horses; there were four-in-hand coaches, in their brilliant colors of green, yellow, blue, vermilion, etc.; there were dog-carts, with the rich young men just from their lounging at the clubs; there were hacks, buggies and many other styles, all filled with people, pleasant-faced and chatting as they enjoyed the exhilaration of the ride and scene.

At length Clark began to scan the numbers on the houses, and presently he said:

"No. — Ah, this is the house."

Looking with a quick glance at the imposing exterior, he further remarked:

"It's quite a palace, as I expected. Well, well, I never in my life was in a better humor to enter a rich man's house."

He rung the bell, and a few moments later was seated in one of the parlors, waiting for the appearance of some member of the family.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, rapidly looking through the extended suit of rooms, "this Worden must be one of the biggest of the big bugs of New York. I know something of paintings and statuary, and what I see here has cost a mint of money. The house is grand—its contents are magnificent, especially Miss Sallie."

The words had scarcely died upon his lips, when a beautiful woman appeared at the doorway.

"Miss Sallie Worden," he said, rising and then bowing most profoundly.

"Mr. Clark, my rescuer—welcome."

Clark gazed upon her in rapture. He had not, by reason of the circumstances under which he had before seen her, recognized her beauty to be of the splendid and ravishing type which it now proved to be.

She was a blonde. The delicacy of her complexion, the softness of her eyes, and, withal, her decided intellectuality, made her face worthy of more than a slight inspection. Her manners were those of the cultivated and already experienced society lady, and her voice was musical in the extreme.

Only a few words had been exchanged between them when Mr. and Mrs. Worden entered the parlor, and were introduced to Mr. Clark by their daughter.

"Mr. Clark," said Mr. Worden, in a hearty, bluff way, "we have heard all about your gallant and courageous conduct with our daughter. We thank you, as only loving parents can."

"Oh, sir," cried the mother, "it was most fortunate that you happened to stand where you did. Otherwise our dear child would have fallen on the pavement, and, probably, been trampled to death. There are so many horrid accidents in New York nowadays."

Clark, with great inward self-satisfaction, bowed his repeated thanks to all this, and at the first opportunity said:

"Before I go further in this, to myself most happy acquaintance, may I ask you to read these letters of introduction from my friends?"

"Put up your letters, sir," interrupted Mr. Worden. "I have no occasion to read them. I have heard of you at the clubs, but your best introduction to us is the gallantry of your conduct to our daughter."

"We can see that you are a gentleman," said Mrs. Worden, glancing admiringly upon Clark, "even if your actions had not already made it known to us."

"All is quite right, I assure you, on the score of your introduction and social standing," said Mr. Worden. "Let me again say that both my wife and myself thank you from our hearts for the service you have done us, and if in any way I can discharge a small part of the obligation pray command me."

"Sir," continued Clark, quite moved, "you overwhelm me. The service was nothing, and one word from your beautiful daughter repaid me in full."

"Mrs. Worden and myself," remarked Mr. Worden, "are about to take a ride in the Park. My gout has prevented me from going for some days. I suppose you would not care to join us, as my daughter is to remain at home and will entertain you."

"Either to go or to stay," said Clark, with an air of infinitesimal politeness, "would afford me great pleasure, but I feel that I am charmed to this spot by a fascination superior to any will of my own."

"Sir," said Mr. Worden, "you talk well. I will now leave you with my daughter, but on Sunday I shall expect you to dine with us. Can you do so?"

"I will do so with great pleasure."

"Then good-day. God bless you!"

Mr. Worden shook Clark warmly by the hand, as did his wife, and both then withdrew from the room.

"This is the greatest luck of my life," was the reflection of Clark, as he turned to try his arts with the daughter.

"Do you play and sing?" he asked.

"Yes, both."

"Will you favor me?"

"What kind of music do you like?"

"As I have traveled much in Europe," said Clark, "I have heard all kinds, and by the best artists of the day. But I think I can say that I love melody so well that I appreciate all music, without having a preference for any particular kind or style."

"I hesitate to exhibit my own poor talents before one who has heard so much, and I'm half-inclined to believe that you speak as you do because you do not know what kind I play," said Miss Worden.

"Not at all," replied Clark, smiling slightly. "Furthermore, as a judge of physiognomy, I dare to assert that such is your natural perseverance of character that your talents in music, and in all other respects, are not to be designated by the term 'poor.'"

"Let me show you that you are not the judge that you think you are," and thus speaking, the beautiful, graceful and happy-looking lady advanced toward the grand piano, which stood in the parlor.

What a startling difference in these two beings though they appeared so congenial in their present companionship.

The man was a murderer, a robber, and the perpetrator of many other crimes. Nay, at this time he was carrying out, by the infernal witchery of his polite acts, a plot scarcely less nefarious than murder itself. As he smiled, and seemed only the gay, polished gentleman, worthy to be in the society of a

virtuous woman, he fully realized his position—his hypocrisy and depravity, but he could no more be turned aside from his purpose than could the springing tiger be held from its prey.

On the other hand, the woman was a pure, gay, joyous creature, who knew nothing of human deceptions or crimes. She would as soon have thought that Heaven was inhabited by the wicked as to have supposed that the courtly, educated man in her company was other than what he seemed to be.

Thus it was that, in this most strange and romantic manner, virtue and innocence, and deceit and vice, were placed in intimate association.

Miss Worden's performance, both instrumental and vocal, was very fine.

"You astonish me," said Clark, clapping his hands, after the close of a most brilliantly executed operatic selection. "Your natural talents are very great, and your education has been thorough."

"Praise from you," she said, looking intently into his face, "is praise indeed."

Then she performed other pieces, and all with marked brilliancy, even for her. She was happy, and she wished to please her listener.

"Now," he said, "try something simpler and tender. It is in such melodies that the heart often finds its greatest pleasure and comfort."

Drumming on the keys for a moment, she seemed to reflect, and then, with a light of joy suffusing her whole countenance, she said:

"I recall one of that kind."

It was a simple, sentimental English ballad, but, as she warbled it, she threw into her voice an exquisite melody and pathos. At the close her utterance was tremulous with suppressed emotion.

"Why," cried Clark, "you melt me to tears—you will break my heart. The story is too, too sad; the music would melt a stone."

"You are tender-hearted, then."

"To sympathy, yes—to the shafts of Cupid, most vulnerable."

Now a little flirtation began. One word led to another, and each drew them nearer to absolute confessions of their personal feelings.

The acquaintance was romantic in all its aspects, and what was more natural than that two such people should not only talk, but confess their love. Miss Worden was infatuated, and she permitted herself to say more than she had ever confessed to any man before. Clark caught at these words, and he flamed, with consummate adroitness, the sparks into a flame.

At length he thought it polite to terminate his visit.

"On Sunday," he said, "I will dine with your father. Until that time, it will be an age of longing to bask again in the sunshine of your beauty and talents. Adieu."

He withdrew from the parlor, as if leaving the presence of a veritable queen.

"How noble—how sweet!" cried Miss Worden, as she hurried to her own apartments, filled with emotions of the most intense character.

"Satan is ruling my destiny magnificently," said Clark, as he turned down the avenue. "I sold myself to him long ago, but he never befriended me so grandly before. Poor girl—she thinks me tender-hearted, she believes that I love her. I know that she loves me. She has allowed herself to fall into my net almost before I could spread it. Satan, old fellow, I'll drink a health to thee!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE GILDED SNARE.

NEW YORK, like other great cities, has a great number of gambling-places. Though unlawful they are permitted to exist, without more than an occasional interference on the part of the police. They are located up-town and down-town, in fact in every quarter where they can be visited most conveniently by those who are addicted to the vice of gaming. And if the persons who habitually or occasionally frequent them could be paraded to the public eye it would astonish every one to see how numerous they are, and to what respectable classes they belong.

Men in high and responsible positions and who are regarded in the community as moral and influential members of it are often inveterate gamblers. Persons who, in some inland city or village, are regarded as examples of propriety, when in New York are of those who go the gaming-table.

Such are the baneful results of the passion for gaming, by which the laws of communities are defied, and moral and social standing sacrificed.

Men who live by crime are generally gamblers. Clark was one, and on the night after his interview with Sallie Worden he was present in a noted gaming establishment up-town.

These places are elegantly fitted up. Money is lavishly expended for furniture, and all kinds of costly decorations. When the splendid chandeliers are ablaze in the hours for play, and the flood of light pours down upon the carved and glistening furniture, the fine paintings, the mirrors and frescoes, the silver and glassware and the luxurious carpets, it is a scene of splendor which is not often exceeded. Rare wines and liquors, and the best of cigars are provided free. Then there are suppers, or collations, each night, of game and whatever is the rarest and most expensive in the market.

Thus it is that, in the midst of all that is elegant and hospitable, the slaves of the gaming-table are lured to their destruction.

Another matter should be mentioned. Every man is required to act the part of a gentleman in his play, and in all intercourse with the other visitors. Disputes, oaths and all boisterous conduct are against the rules, and immediately bring the person into disgrace with both the players and proprietors. No matter what the sum of money lost may be—no

matter if disgrace and ruin may come from this result, it is a gambler's honor that the stake must go, and any obligation given must be met.

Clark's passion for gambling had, throughout his career, involved him in heavy losses. He was an expert and cool player, but, as is always the case in the course of time, his gains, and other large sums of money, were swept away. Still his infatuation continued, and he plunged into one crime after another, to obtain money, only to lose most of it at the gaming-table.

"Without the excitement of gaming," he often said, "life would be robbed of its greatest pleasure to me."

His playing was the admiration of all who saw it. On this night, he was seated at the faro table, with "chips," or little pieces of ivory representing a large sum of money, which he had paid for them.

The top of the table represented a "deck" of cards, and before the dealer was a small box, which contained the pack used in the playing. When the dealer said, "Gentlemen, make your game," each person placed the amount in chips where he proposed to play it. When this was all done, the dealer from his box, produced the winning card, and those who won received their stakes and winnings, and those who lost saw their stakes go to the "bank."

No group of men can show more to startle the beholder than the company at a gambling-table. In the famous picture known as Peal's "Court of Death" there are groups which depict in their countenances, with terrible distinctness, the various joys and sorrows of the human breast. But night after night in the gambling-houses are to be seen groups which are not less startling to contemplate.

Joy—terror—remorse are all seen, as you look from face to face. But who cares for these? who notices what may be the condition of his fellow player?

"Make your game, gentlemen!"

Click—click—click of the chips, which represent not only so much money, but often the fall from integrity of the man who puts them down.

—wins.

Behold—from the staring eyeballs—from the blanched faces—how many of these men have bet on the losing cards.

But, in such a crowd, who is rash enough to speak a word of regret? Outside of the house you may do anything you please. You can go home and weep, and blow out your brains, or rush to the dock, and jump into the midnight waters.

But here the light dazzles, the splendor fascinates, the free wines intoxicate—and the mad play goes on.

Clark played heavily, and he won. The other players looked at him, admiringly but enviously.

"What luck!" said one.

"He'll break the bank," added another.

"How cool he is."

"He's just the same when he loses."

"He's an old gamester, though a young man."

Thus talked the other players, and some persons who were looking on.

At length a man came up and whispered a word in Clark's ear.

"One more bet," he said, "a big one, too, and then I'll stop for to-night."

Again he bet, and again he won.

Filling his pockets with the chips, he rose and said:

"To-morrow night the luck will likely be the other way. Then all this will go back whence it came."

Directly we find him in another part of the room, where he is in company with the man who had spoken to him at the table.

"Sorry to interrupt you, Clark," said the man, "but I haven't time to stay much longer."

"All right, my boy," replied Clark, in a particularly happy and jovial tone. "I had a great run of luck. I was in a fair way to break the bank, but I don't want to do it. These fellows here have always treated me so well that I don't care to hurt their feelings in that way."

"Well," said the man, with a smile, "you've certainly hurt their pockets pretty well to-night."

Clark smiled and hummed a tune.

"Now to business," remarked the man, who was Bill Jacobs. "How do you get on with that girl?"

Splendidly," returned Clark, drawing very close to Jacobs, in the corner of a window. "The road is already clear to a great success."

"Good!" said Jacobs, emphatically. "Our fellows have managed several abductions of children, and made heaps of money out of it. It requires nerve and adroitness to do it successfully, however, especially in the case of a grown person. Children are not so much trouble."

"From what I know of you, Jacobs," replied Clark, "and from what you have told me about your associates, I am satisfied the thing can be managed, and a great sum of money made for all of us. Where is the hiding-place?"

"Over in Jersey," whispered Jacobs. "We have a house, and an old woman in charge of it, for such cases. It's a splendid place for the purpose; lonely—hid away, and the old woman is the smartest old thing in the world."

"All right. I can manage the girl. I'll engage to have her at any point where you think it best to seize her any day or night next week. Consult with your fellows—have the plan all worked out in detail, without regard to expense, and so there can be no chance for failure—and give me the particulars at this place two nights hence."

"Depend upon me to do all that you say."

"Now take a glass of champagne before you go," said Clark, rising.

The two plotters soon had foaming glasses in their hands, and Jacobs said:

"Here's to success."

Clark nodded, and they both tossed off the wine.

Then they hastily withdrew, and, on reaching the street, one went up the street, and the other in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER X. A ROGUE'S RETREAT.

CRIME is followed as a matter of business by hundreds of men and women in the city of New York. They watch for opportunities, and they study the risks, the same as merchants do the reports of markets. They are professionals, and they are proud of what they plan and execute.

These people walk the streets, and some of them dress and look so well that you would never take them for what they are. The police, and those who wish to have transactions with them, can always find them.

Clark had not confined his acquaintanceship to the gentlemen at the club. With the ample knowledge of villainy and villains which he possessed, he was not long in finding out the whereabouts of some of the most dangerous men of the city.

Jacobs was one whose acquaintance he had made, and this man was a member of the same gang of which Tall Mike had told Sharp Sam in the Tombs. By a singular circumstance, but one frequently observed in human affairs, the interests of Clark and Sharp Sam were drawing them together, though they knew it not.

Going to one of the avenues, the man Jacobs took a car. He rode a long distance up-town, and then he walked down a street for several blocks. Then he opened a wooden gate, and entered a yard, which had a small, dingy-looking house at the rear part of it. He gave a peculiar rap on the front door, and was immediately admitted. Acting as if he was acquainted with the place, he went to the back room on the same floor, to which he was also admitted, after another rap.

Two men and a woman were already here. On the table was a pitcher and glasses, with beer in them.

"You're late, Jacobs," said one of the men. "My man was winning heavily at faro, so it was late before I could talk with him."

"Vell," asked a stout, ugly-looking man, after drinking off a glass of the beer, "did 'e talk business?"

"Plenty of it," replied Jacobs. "He's a fine fellow, seems to be a gentleman, but hang me if I don't think he's one of our own kind."

"What does he want?" asked the woman, a fat, uncouth creature, who was the wife of the man who first spoke.

"It's a big thing," returned Jacobs. "It will require our best skill and courage, but there's money in it."

"Lots of it, hey?" said the ugly man. "Count me in."

"What is it?" demanded the thoroughly curious woman. "Don't be holdin' in any longer."

"Why," said Jacobs, with much deliberation and importance, "the daughter of a Fifth avenue millionaire is to be abducted."

"Ducted," cried the ugly man, "that job suits me."

"Is it a child or a woman?" asked the woman.

"A woman," said Jacobs.

"I'd rather snap up a child," said the woman.

"Vell, I don't care vich it is," remarked the ugly man. "There's vays to manage any of 'em."

"Don't be too bold an' rash," said the woman.

"We're short-handed now, 'cause you didn't take my advice. Tall Mike wouldn't be where he is if you had listened to me."

"Shut up! and drink your beer," said her husband, with a scowl.

"So you said when his job was afore us," replied the woman, spitefully.

"Your last term up the river," retorted the man, "has weakened you, so that you're afraid of your own shadow."

"Am I?" almost screamed the wife. "You lie, and you know it."

She seized one of the goblets, and would have thrown it, but Jacobs caught her hand, and said, angrily:

"This won't do. No more quarreling while I'm here. Let me talk business, and then go."

"It is wrong," said the woman, "but Dick provokes me. He knows I'm a true-blue on all 'cations."

"Shut up!" exclaimed her husband, with a sneer.

"Dry up!" joined in the ugly man. "Ve has business to settle."

After this the whole party talked long and earnestly, but without any further outbreak on the part of Dick and his wife. She was a most shrewd and valuable woman for the gang, but Dick had a habit of underrating her, which always caused her to get more or less angry.

The plan for the abduction was laid out in great detail, and those who were to take part in it were selected for their ability for the special work assigned to them.

"Now it's all understood," said Jacobs, at length.

"And the tracks are all covered," added Dick.

"We'll do it, slick an' sure," remarked the ugly man.

"I hope it will come out right," said the woman, "but you'll raise all New York with excitement."

"We'll bring out the dollars of that dotting father," replied Jacobs.

"I'm as sure of mine," said the ugly man, "as if I had 'em in my pocket."

The meeting now broke up, and Jacobs quietly left the house. The others all remained, and, in the course of a short time, several other men who belonged to the gang came into the house, and went to their rooms.

Dick and his wife claimed to keep a boarding-

house for mechanics and other working people. The police knew that all this was only the cover for the real occupation of those who lived at the place. But it was Dick's "castle," under the law, and it was never invaded, except when a warrant was issued by a magistrate for some one living there who was charged with crime.

CHAPTER XI. SALLIE WORDEN'S PERIL.

THE abduction of Sallie Worden was rendered less difficult by the fact that Clark was one of the chief agents in it, and by the other that she placed implicit confidence in him. Had any attempt of such a nature been made by the men who were to be engaged in it without such assistance as Clark was able to give, it would have most likely resulted in failure.

At the dinner on Sunday, he had been received with great hospitality and favor by all the family. The meal passed off with much spirit and pleasure on the part of all present, and Clark was especially brilliant and entertaining.

Before he left, he made an engagement with Miss Sallie to attend the Academy of Music on the next opera night. When he got back to his apartments, he seemed somewhat depressed. Dropping languidly into one of the easy-chairs, he muttered to himself:

"Fate—relentless fate—hurries me on. My heart grieves for that poor girl and her parents. What hours of suffering they must soon undergo. To be sure no real harm will come to her, but what a shock she will have. I wish it could be otherwise, but it cannot."

He rose and paced the floor in agitation.

"Her youth and innocence appeal to me, as scarcely ever a woman's did before," he continued. "But I cannot spare her. I have gone too far with those fellows, and, what is more, I shall soon require every dollar which will come to me out of the ransom exacted for her release and return. Oh, that gaming-table—it swallows up every dollar that I can get by all manner of—yes, I will say it—crimes."

An opera night when there is a popular opera and company, and, especially, a favorite prima donna, is an affair of importance in New York.

The streets leading to the Academy of Music are noisy with the roll of carriages, bearing ladies and gentlemen, in full evening dress to its brilliantly-lighted portals. In couples and in groups they go to their seats and boxes, chatting and happy. The ladies here first produce their newest fashions, and fairly blaze in costly gems.

When the house is full, as is always the case on such occasions as we speak of, with one of these fashionable assemblages, the scene is dazzling and grand indeed. Then when the curtain rolls up, and, at length, the house resounds with the crash of instruments, the ravishing strains of the prima donna, or the inspiring chorus, the beholder seems borne into some realm of enchantment.

In one of the most prominent boxes were Clark and Miss Worden. Her father and mother generally attended on such nights, but Mrs. Worden had been seized during the afternoon with a sudden indisposition.

"Good luck again," thought Clark, when he heard that neither of the parents could go.

Miss Worden was magnificently attired. She wore a new dress which had been imported for her from the most celebrated establishment of Paris. Her diamonds were magnificent and in profusion.

Clark looked at her with admiration, and he also began a rapid calculation of the value of her adornments.

"Why," he mentally argued, "she wears the value of a small bank. When you steal her person, she conveniently carries off for you her most valuable possessions."

"You seem abstracted," said Miss Worden, turning to her companion, "and yet you have told me that you are fond of music. Certainly it is very fine to-night."

"Very fine," replied Clark, rousing himself, and somewhat annoyed that his inattention should have been noticed.

"When I come to the opera, I live in a new world. I dream—I feel perfectly happy," said Miss Worden.

"You are happy to-night, then?"

"Most happy! Oh, listen to that sweet duet."

There was a stillness came over the audience. Every one was anxious to catch every note of the splendid singing. Thus it continued until the close of the duet, when the house rung with applause, which could not be silenced until the *encore* was responded to by a repetition of a part of the duet.

The act now closed.

"Beautiful! beautiful!" exclaimed Miss Worden, applauding most earnestly.

"They are superb singers," said Clark, "but such an enthusiastic house as this would inspire any one."

"What a precious gift the power to sing," said Miss Worden. "When carried to its highest scientific perfection, as we see it on the operatic stage, I esteem it equal to any talent that a man or woman can possess."

"You have the gift," replied Clark.

"You are making fun of me," returned Miss Worden, with a smile. "Do not mention my school-girl performances with the kind of music to which I allude."

"I will not be driven from my position," said Clark, with some firmness. "Public singers, of course, are trained and scientific performers, but your gift, as far as you have gone in the effort to train and mature it, is far from being of insignificant merit."

"I thank you," returned the lady, laughing, "but I believe you are a partial critic."

Thus they chatted.

Miss Worden, however, observed that Clark seemed under some depression. Once she ventured to ask:

"Are you not well?"

"A slight headache—that is all," he replied, willing to have some excuse for his actions.

The fact was that he was passing an evening of torment instead of enjoyment. The very happiness which he saw around him only filled him the more with a sadness which he could not resist.

At this very time he knew that a terrible plot against the fair and interesting woman in his companionship was ready for execution. The machinery was in motion, the agents were in their places, and, as soon as the now quick-hastening hour should arrive, the plan would be carried out to the letter.

No wonder that he was abstracted and depressed under such circumstances as these. Schooled as he was in crime, and calm as he was naturally in his proceedings, he would have been more than human not to have felt some agitation now.

"The last act," said Miss Worden, as the curtain again rolled up. She noticed that Clark looked very pale, and she hastened to add: "I'm glad of it for your sake. The house is very warm, and you will feel better, I hope, in the cool air."

He smiled and thanked her for her consideration. Then he reflected in his own disturbed mind in this manner:

"Her kind words will drive me to distraction. Without knowing it she is literally pouring coals of fire upon my head. The last act she says, and then the first act in a performance of which she knows not of."

The opera was over.

Before the last sounds had died away the ladies began to throw on their elegant wraps, and there was now a slow movement toward the doors. The lights near the stage were next put out, and the musicians disappeared. As soon as the people reached the street, they hastened to the carriages in waiting, or to private carriages, which were called by the policemen, and rode off, either homeward or to some of the saloons or restaurants.

In the dense part of the crowd came Clark and Miss Worden. She was leaning upon his arm, and talking most gayly. He answered, but his thoughts were on another matter.

"To Delmonico's," said Clark, as he followed his companion into one of the carriages before the entrance.

"I had rather go home," urged Miss Worden, as Clark took his seat, and the vehicle drove off.

"Oh, no," he replied; "a little refreshment will do us no harm. We will not remain long."

But he had another object in this proceeding. On account of the presence of the police, in some force, in the neighborhood of the Academy, and the inspection of the hacks in line, the abduction could not be accomplished in that vicinity.

Reaching Delmonico's, then in Fourteenth street, they alighted and entered the place. In a short time, a man came to the coach, paid the charge, and dismissed it, saying:

"The gentleman and lady do not live far, and they'll walk home after supper."

Presently, however, an empty coach came to the same position, and waited.

This was a vehicle under the control of the gang engaged in the abduction scheme.

It was not a great while before Clark and Miss Worden appeared again. They advanced to the carriage. She stepped in, but at this instant a man came quickly from the other side, planted a blow on the head of Clark, knocking him down, and then jumped into the carriage, when it was driven off at full speed.

There was a half-smothered cry from within:

"Help!—h-e-l-p!"

Very few persons were in the street at this late hour, but one man, who was passing as Clark was regaining his feet, came up to him, and said:

"Did you call for help?"

"I did not."

"Thought I heard a cry. You are bleeding, sir. A little too much of Delmonico's good wine, I suppose. Glad you are not hurt by falling. Good-night."

Thus speaking the man went his way. Clark hastened away, also, for it was not his present desire to encounter a policeman.

He intended to report the affair, but he was anxious to give his confederates as much time as possible. The blow which he received, not a severe one, however, was given to make it appear that the attack was made upon him, also.

Let us now follow the carriage. Driven at a speed as fast as was possible in the city, it took a course up avenues and through cross-streets, all the time going in the direction of the Hudson river at some point far up-town.

Inside, in a perfectly insensible condition, was Miss Worden, and on the seat by her side was our former acquaintance Dick Lacy, one of the most brutal and desperate men of New York.

He had smothered her first outcry by choking her, and then he applied a handkerchief saturated with chloroform to her nostrils.

"There, my lady," he said, "you'll keep quiet now, I think, until we get you where your noise can't hurt us."

As they passed some of the street lamps, which threw their rays into the carriage, he gazed upon the inanimate form, and remarked:

"By Jingo, she's a prize. How fine she's dressed, an' even in this little light I see her diamonds sparkling. This will be a fine job for all on us if it's worked right."

The figure stirred and moaned.

"A little more chloroform," said Dick. The rough fellow held the handkerchief to the face of his victim for a very brief space. Then he began to remove the diamond earrings, saying:

"These here valuables I'd better take care off. It'll never do to trust her over at Kate's with all this jewelry on. No, I'll take it myself, and account for it to the boys."

Having obtained the earrings, he next got possession of a magnificent brooch, a necklace, ornaments in the hair, bracelets, and a number of rings. The quantity and the evident value astonished him.

"Nowadays," he said, "these fashionable women wear an awful lot of jewelry. It would seem as if this pretty maid had put on all this 'ere to oblige the boys when we were goin' to capture her. There, I've put them all away in my side-pocket, until I can look them over at home."

Going down a lonely side street, the vehicle was driven to the end of a wharf on the Hudson river. As it stopped there was a low whistle given in a small boat, just moving from under the dock, which the driver answered by another of the same kind.

The door of the carriage opened, and Dick got out and went to the side of the wharf. He said, in a subdued voice:

"Up here, in a hurry, men. All right, so far."

Three men then came up, and with the assistance of Dick, the still unconscious woman was taken out of the carriage and placed in the boat.

"Cover her up," said Dick; "she's delicate, you know."

Then the boat was rapidly rowed out into the darkness of the river. Dick jumped into the carriage, and it was driven away.

They plied their oars steadily.

"We are in a strong tide," said a person whom on another occasion we designated as "the ugly man."

"Yes, an' we must keep well up to fetch our land-in," said another of the men.

"I've crossed too often," returned the ugly man, "to steer out of the va'. Pull hearty, now."

A low moan was heard.

"Listen to 'er."

"I wonder if she thinks 'erself in Fifth avenue?"

"At the hopera to-night an' now in this hopen little boat crossin' the river. My sakes, what a change for 'er."

"Goin' to see Black Kate, too. Ha, ha, what a gay time she's goin' to 'ave."

"But we's to give 'er up?"

"Yes, when the ransom—a big one, too—is paid by her father."

"Suppose 'e won't come down?"

"Then she'll go down in Black Kate's cellar, an' never come hout ag'in. Dick Lacy will wring it hout of 'im. But there's another chap in this 'ere job, managin' with Dick. We're hall in for a 'eavy divvy."

Such was the conversation of the desperadoes in the boat, but it was not suffered to lose any headway. The rowing was steady and skillful.

"Now I kin 'ead 'er in," said the ugly man, after some time had elapsed.

"I'm glad to 'ear you say so," replied one of the others; "hit's been a bloody long row. Besides day-break won't be far hoo when the lady gits to Black Kate's."

Ten minutes later the boat grounded on an uninhabited part of the New Jersey shore. A covered wagon stood in a dark spot, under a slight bluff which bordered the water on one side.

The same kind of whistle heard at the New York wharf was made by the occupant of the wagon, and answered by one of the men in the boat.

When they raised Miss Worden she had revived a little, but before she could make a single exclamation she was securely gagged and bound. They hastened to put her in the wagon, which at once started on its journey. The boat put off for the New York side after the crew had imbibed from a whisky bottle, which they had with them.

The eastern horizon was just showing the first signs of morning when the wagon reached a small, neglected-looking farm-house, which was the abode of Black Kate. Here Miss Worden was carried to a room in the second story, and left with the negress, who was now to be her keeper and persecutor.

CHAPTER XII.

A SNAKE IN THE GRASS.

AFTER delaying as much as possible in reaching Broadway and Union Square, Clark there called a passing cab and ordered the driver to take him to No. — Fifth avenue, Mr. Worden's residence. When he reached there and went up the stoop, the door was instantly opened by Mr. Worden himself, who said:

"My dear sir, it is very late."

"A strange thing has happened, sir," returned Clark, entering the vestibule.

For the first time Mr. Worden noticed that his daughter was not there.

"Where is my daughter?" he asked, in great alarm.

At this juncture Mrs. Worden rushed down-stairs, saying:

"Where is Sallie? Oh, God! what has happened?"

"Coming out of Delmonico's, I was knocked down when about to enter the coach, and Miss Sallie was driven away without me."

The mother gave a shrill scream and fainted. Mr. Worden staggered, too, as if he would fall, but recovered himself instantly, and gasped:

"This is terrible, sir. How do you account for such an affair?"

"It is another of the awful crimes which people plan and commit in this city."

"Have you notified the police?"

"No, sir, not yet. I thought it my duty to come here first with the intelligence."

"I will go with you, instantly. You have a vehicle at the door, I believe?"

"A cab, which I called in Union Square. It was fortunate I found one, for I was very faint, myself, from loss of blood."

"Are you seriously hurt? Thoughts about my daughter prevented me from asking the question before."

"I think not; but I am considerably bruised and weakened."

"Are you able to go with me?"

"Oh, yes. Let us start at once."

Clark well knew that by this time his confederates were past pursuit and discovery. Consequently he began to be as eager as he was before dilatory.

When Clark and Mr. Worden reached the police station of the precinct where the affair occurred, they caused a profound sensation. The sergeant in charge was dozing at the desk, but he tried to appear fully awake when the two presented themselves before him. Mr. Worden related the story of the abduction in a few words.

The sergeant listened, attentively, opening his eyes wider and wider.

"This gentleman was knocked down in front of Delmonico's, and your daughter carried off in a carriage before his very eyes," said the officer.

"Yes," replied Mr. Worden, "what is to be done?"

"Well," continued the officer, "all I've got to say is that it is the boldest and biggest job ever attempted here in New York."

"What is to be done?" again asked Mr. Worden.

"Not much to-night. You see this thing has been all planned by men who know their business, and by this time they have disposed of the woman somewhere. We'll send out a general alarm, but the thing will have to be worked up by the detectives."

Clark, as he stood listening, was the picture of well simulated anxiety. His face was pale and blood-stained, and it was also to be seen that his clothing was soiled from its contact with the pavement. Secretly, however, he was pleased with the opinion of the policeman that the abduction was a success.

"What kind of a man knocked you down?" asked the sergeant.

"It was too sudden for me to notice him at all," replied Clark.

"You couldn't identify him, then?"

"I could not."

"Well, I've all the particulars down on the blotter here, and I'll do all I can to-night. Both of you must go to head-quarters early to-morrow morning."

"My God, this is awful," broke out Mr. Worden, as great tears started to his eyes; "what may not have happened to my daughter before to-morrow morning!"

"You feel bad, as a father," said the officer, "but when such a well-concocted plan as this one has been boldly carried out, you can't get the clew in a minute. The officer on that post could not have seen it, or he'd have reported it before this. After the general alarm goes out, we may have some news."

"Do not spare men or money," said Mr. Worden.

"Search the whole city, and country, if necessary."

"I do not think your daughter will be harmed," said the officer.

"You do not?" returned Mr. Worden, with a ray of hope in his face.

"No, sir. She has been stolen to make you pay a good round sum to get her back."

"I will pay it," said Mr. Worden.

All this conversation had been hurried, and did not occupy much time. Mr. Worden and Clark now withdrew to their cab, while the officer proceeded to his duties in connection with the affair.

When riding along, however, Mr. Worden remarked:

"Clark, I hope you will be able to be with me to-morrow."

"Nothing short of death shall prevent me from coming to you in the morning. Oh, it is a sore blow for Mrs. Worden and yourself. Why did I take this angelic creature from your roof?"

"Oh, we cannot blame you."

"I know it, but I feel distressed beyond measure that such a calamity should have occurred through my taking her out to-night."

"Give me your cool head and brave heart to help me in finding her, and all will be well again."

"My dear sir, command my time—my life—in such a cause."

It was fortunate for Mr. Worden that he could not see the sinister smile which passed over the countenance of Clark, when he was thus addressing him. After leaving Mr. Worden at his dwelling, Clark ordered the cab to leave him at his own place of abode. When he got to his apartments he at once looked at himself in the mirror and said:

"Lacy is a hard hitter. He made me see stars, if I did not see him, as I told the knowing police sergeant. By Saint Paul, the work goes bravely on, as the wily Richard says, but he was a fool to some of us in these days. This abduction is a deep as well as a brilliant thing. I like it all, except being knocked down. I didn't think Lacy would strike quite so hard. I'll wash myself, and then go to bed."

He was not destined to sleep, however, for in the course of the next hour the reporters of the morning papers, who had obtained intelligence of the abduction, began to seek for particulars, or his "statement," as they called it. He was glad of this opportunity to put into the papers a version of the matter favorable to his own connection with it. Mr. Worden was also interviewed, but he could not say much, and the reporters went away to tell the astonished public, as they did the next morning, of the moaning and frantic mother in the Fifth Avenue mansion, who was calling:

"My child!—my child!"

CHAPTER XIII.

SHARP SAM ON THE ALERT.

THE hurrying events connected with our other characters has withdrawn our attention from Sharp Sam for some days. He has not been idle, however, in regard to his own concerns.

Confinement began to wear upon him. Accustomed as he had been to the free air, and to run about the city, he grew pale and weak in the unwholesome atmosphere of the Tombs.

"I'll die in 'ere," he said, one morning, when he looked particularly pale and sick.

"No, you won't," returned Tall Mike. "You'll change—all do who come 'ere—but you won't die."

"I wish I could," said Sharp Sam, desperately, as tears came into his eyes; "there's nothin' for me to live for."

"Why, yes, there is. You forget you're to get me out of 'ere pretty soon, fine our gang, an' grow up to be a big cracksmen. I think your future's flatterin' for a poor boy."

Sam was silent, but he shuddered when he thought of the life and usual end of a cracksmen.

His spirits were certainly very drooping. He had protested over and over again his entire innocence of the crime. The police, and even some of the reporters, had taken the matter up and made investigations, but there were absolutely no clews pointing to any one as the perpetrator of the murder except Sam himself.

The only thing to cheer him was the prospect of making his escape. But it was no easy matter to get out of a prison like the Tombs. Many had tried it only to fail. A few brave and lucky men had managed it. Hence, the chances in favor of Sharp Sam were not sufficient to encourage him much.

"When am I to go?" he asked of Tall Mike on this morning.

"Well, as you're so anxious to leave my company," returned the other, smiling, "suppose we say to-night."

"To-night! Thank God!" exclaimed Sam.

"Hush—hush," said Tall Mike, "don't go on so. If you don't keep cool an' shady it'll be all up with you before you start."

Sam turned even paler than he was before at this rebuke as well as warning.

"I'll be careful—very careful," he replied, "an' not make too much noise again."

"Why, my little kid," replied Tall Mike, "you're always doin' it. Ever since we've been in 'ere you've been inclined to talk an' caper as if you had no dangers surroundin' you."

"So I have," confessed Sam.

"These prison chaps are awful sharp. They may know now all about what we're goin' to do an' are only waitin' to nab you."

"What'll they do with me then?"

"Put you in a dark, strong cell below."

"I hope they won't get me."

"You've got a mighty lot of risks to run, an' if you're not true grit you're a goner, sure. Perhaps you'd better not try it."

"If I die in the 'tempt I'll go," said Sharp Sam. "Wait until I get my spunk up an' you'll see whether I'll flinch or not."

"That's good talk—you'll soon be put on your mettle."

Through the agency of Tall Mike, quite extensive preparations had been made for the escape of Sharp Sam. He knew just what tools and appliances were required, and he managed to have them all secretly brought into the prison by the persons who had visited him.

Lacy's wife came one day, and no one was more adroit than she in aiding in escapes. While she talked with Tall Mike she transferred to him a rope and a chisel.

"Is that the kid that's comin' to us?" she asked.

"We're wantin' one badly."

"He's charged with murder and robbery already," said Tall Mike.

"He don't look bad," replied the woman, staring at Sam, who was in the further part of the cell.

"All the better for us."

"Sure enough."

"You musn't beat him too much when he comes to you."

"No more than is good for him."

"You're all-fired rough sometimes. You made Charlie, the Kid, jump off the dock and drown himself."

The woman's face colored, and she answered, spitefully:

"Don't bring that 'ere up ag'in me. You fellows all 'buse me now, an' yet I does all I can to help the gang."

"So you do," replied Tall Mike, in a soothing tone, "we couldn't get along without you. But I want you to let up on this 'ere kid. He'll learn fast enough, for he's naturally cunning, an' sharp, but he won't let anybody beat him, I know."

In this way Tall Mike sought to do a service for Sam, when he should seek this woman after his escape.

A ladder had been made out of the rope which she had smuggled into the prison and cell. Fastened to the ends were hooks, also brought by her at another time—which readily caught into any crevice or projection. With the chisel the glass window had been broken and loosened, so that it could readily be removed. The ladder afforded the means of reaching the window from the inside of the cell, and it was to be the means of Sam's descent on the outside.

Tall Mike had worked skillfully and faithfully at this affair, using such caution that no one suspected what was going on, though the keepers sometimes came into the cell. Sharp Sam looked on in admiration, and, when he could, assisted with great zeal.

"I've no doubt that you'll get out of this cell,"

was now the remark of Tall Mike, "but what true-

bles me is how you'll git along after that. I've given you all the points, but I'm afraid you'll git frightened, an' give yourself away."

"Never," cried Sam. "I'll lay low 'bout the yard till I can shove into the street in some way."

"I've worked so hard and planned so much for you that it'll make me feel awful bad to hear that they've caught you ag'in," said Mike, with feeling.

At first when he came into the companionship of this man, Sharp Sam had recoiled from him. But his kindness had been constant, and this touches the heart, no matter from what source it may come. Consequently, as the time of separation approached, though it was to give liberty to Sam, it made him feel sorrowful, and he readily reciprocated the feeling shown by Mike.

"You've been a good friend to me," said Sam, "an' I'll never forget it."

"Thanks, my little kid. As I've always told you, I think a heap of you. Serve the gang faithfully, an' you'll serve me."

Sam thought the day would never end. It seemed an age between each meal, and by the time the last was served he was very nervous and excited.

"Keep cool, Sam," was Mike's constant injunction.

"I wonder what kind of a night it'll be?" asked Sam.

"One of the keepers told me that it was rough weather outside. All the better for your trip. I hope it'll blow great guns, an' be as dark as pitch."

It was true that a severe storm had prevailed all day. At night it increased, and the whole sky was of an intense blackness.

When all was still in the prison, and the storm was raging at its height without, Sharp Sam prepared to escape through the cell window.

CHAPTER XIV.

A BOY IN A BARREL.

FIRST Tall Mike fastened the ladder and went up to the window. This fastening was accomplished by some iron which Mike had managed to insert in each side of the window. A candle made a light in the cell. Without noise he removed the glass, piece by piece.

"The fresh air smells good," he said, as the wind came through the opening, "though it's very damp outside. I wish I could get my big body through. I'd be off, too."

He descended and began taking the pieces of glass out of his pocket.

"For my sake," he said, "you must take this with you. Drop it quietly on the outside. I'm goin' to be mighty innocent of what you've done when they come in 'ere for an investigation."

"It looks to me," said Sharp Sam, "as if I'll have a tight squeeze up there."

"You'll tear your clothes an' likely your skin, but you won't mind it when you smell the fresh air."

"I'm ready," said Sam, as his face flushed with excitement.

"Well, my boy, good-by," said Tall Mike, in a voice which showed that he was moved.

"Good-by—good-by," returned Sam, seizing the hand of the other, and crying outright.

"Remember all I've told you to do. Be smart, now, an' leave these walls behind you as quick as you can. Up with you."

Sharp Sam grasped the ladder and began to ascend it. Reaching the opening, he attempted to put his head through, but it seemed too large.

"It's all up," he whispered, looking back at Mike, who was intently watching him. "I can't get my head through."

"Push it through if you tear all the skin off," said Mike. "No foolin' now."

Sam made another effort, and this time succeeded.

"Good," muttered Mike.

Then the body of the boy went partly through very nicely.

"Haul up the ladder and drop it on the outside," directed Mike, in a very low tone.

This was done successfully.

"Now go down, an' I'll loosen the ladder an' let it go."

He accomplished this by standing on the bedstead. Stepping upon the floor again he looked up and said:

"The kid's gone. I feel lonely already. I hope he'll get clear of the yard an' outside wall as well as he has the window. What a stunnin' row they'll make in the mornin', when they find out what's been done. But I don't care."

Let us follow Sharp Sam. After the first shock of attempting to put his head through, he proceeded without regard to pain or anything else. He trembled violently, but not with fear.

Getting his head outside, he felt invigorated in a moment, and soon worked his body through by some eel-like contortions. Holding on with one hand, he pulled up the ladder with the other, and let it down on the outside of the wall. In a moment he had his legs through, and then he made his way to the ground.

The ladder dropped, and he rolled it up. He threw down the glass, which he had carried out rolled in some rags and fastened to one of his legs.

"Golly!" said the boy, "it's dark."

Looking about him, he could see the lights at the entrances of the male and female prisons, and in different parts of the yard, but all else was shrouded in gloom.

The boy began to advance, cautiously measuring each step.

"Now's my time to poke round," he muttered; "daylight won't help me."

He groped along the wall for some time, when he said:

"Thunder! there's no end to the wall."

Just then he stepped upon something which gave way, and he fell into a hole. Putting his hand down to examine, he remarked:

"Why, I'm in a sewer-hole. The top has broken in with me. It's the very place to put this 'ere ladder."

Pushing it as far back in the hole as he could, he said:

"That's all right. Who'd have thought I'd stumble on luck in that 'ere way?"

He now thought that he felt something run over his foot.

"Hello!" he said, in some fright, "what's that?"

Again he felt the same thing, and heard a faint squeal.

"Jingo! it's the rats. The whole prison is runnin' over with 'em."

He could not see them, but now there came a whole troop of the animals out of the sewer-hole. They squealed and ran about in a most lively manner. Some of them even undertook to smell and nibble the shoes of Sharp Sam.

"Git out, you varmints," he muttered, kicking right and left. "I had 'nough of such as you in the cell inside."

Moving along, he finally came to the end of the wall of the male prison, which he had been following.

"Now, what's a cove to do?" he said, as he stood irresolute. "I don't know nothin' 'bout this 'ere yard, except what Tall Mike has told me. I don't know where I am, or how to get out. Seems to me it never was so dark before."

He looked up at the black clouds, and he turned his eyes first in one direction and then another in the yard. Then he held up his hand a short distance in front of him, but he could not see it.

"How very, very dark it is," he said. "I needn't hug this wet, cold wall in this 'ere way. Nobody could see me unless we run foul of one 'nother."

Thus emboldened, and at the same time growing more accustomed to the darkness, he left the vicinity of the prison wall, and walked more out in the yard.

"Now, if I could only find a small hole to creep through into the street, I'd be all right," were his further reflections. "But they don't build prisons or prison yards with holes in 'em."

He walked ahead slowly, and suddenly fell prostrate over some timbers.

"Down ag'in," he said; "what's all this piled up 'ere?"

He felt the pieces, and quickly recoiled from them, saying:

"Golly! I know what this is. It's the gallows for that 'ere fellow as is to be hanged when the lawyers will let 'em. Tall Mike told me he had a 'stay,' whatever that may mean."

He went off in another direction.

"I'm in for murder," he said, "an' maybe if I don't get out they'll hang me on that 'ere thing. A lot of 'em has been hung on it already—all men, though. I think it's wicked to hang a boy, 'ticularly if he's innocent."

As Sam thus spoke he began to cry.

He had feelings—though a poor outcast. Love, kindness, and those other sympathies which awaken the tenderness of the human heart, had been to him, except in the case of Mr. Miller and his sons, unknown, but still, ignorant and friendless as he was, he had a heart which felt keenly whenever he thought of his forlorn condition.

He stood crying in the prison yard. Young and thoughtless of ever committing a crime, here he was with the great walls of a prison yard about him, as he was fleeing from trial and probable punishment.

"I've half a mind," he said, "to go to the door yonder an' surrender, myself. I don't care what they do with me. Let 'em hang me, if they want to. I'm poor—I'm ragged—I'm friendless. Nobody cares for me."

Here he cried more bitterly, and wrung his little hands in agony.

"Tall Mike," he said, when he became more composed, "has taken lots of trouble 'bout me, an' it wouldn't look right for me to go an' give myself up. He'd say I was 'traid, but I ain't. No, I'll try to git out, but if they take me ag'in I sha'n't care."

The rain had now ceased, and the heavy clouds were moving rapidly across the sky.

Next came signs of breaking day. In the prison-yard all was darkness, but the light was unmistakable in the upper regions above the walls.

"I must find some place to hide," said Sharp Sam, as he noticed the change which was coming on.

He went down the yard in the direction of a large double-door, which gives admission to vehicles when occasion requires it, from the Leonard street side. The prison occupies an entire block, and the entrance for prisoners and others is on this side, also. Formerly there was a police station in this part of the prison, but it has been removed to another precinct. Access is likewise had to the interior of the prison through the court rooms before spoken of.

Here he saw three covered barrels. Looking into them he found that two were filled with garbage, and the third was empty. Without a second thought he got into the empty one, saying:

"I'll sleep awhile in 'ere, anyhow."

Sharp Sam was thoroughly exhausted, and in a few moments he was in a sound sleep. Notwithstanding the fact that peril surrounded him on every hand, it was impossible for him to resist the drowsy feeling that now overcame him.

Very early there came some keepers and opened the great door, and a wagon drove in as far as the three barrels. Several barrels, evidently empty, were taken out of the wagon, placed by the side of the others, and then, one after the other, these were lifted into the wagon.

"Dot's all right," said the man with the wagon.

"All right," repeated the keepers.

The horses started, and the wagon rattled through the door, and the keepers swung it shut, and barred and bolted it, immediately.

By the greatest piece of good luck, Sharp Sam had been carried out of the prison-yard without any effort on his part. The keepers and driver supposed all the barrels to contain the garbage which was to be taken away, and they had been loaded on the wagon without the slightest inspection.

At the first movement Sharp Sam woke up.

"What now?" he muttered in his first alarm, and came very near putting his head out. Recovering himself, instantly, he kept very quiet, and crouched as low in the barrel as possible. During the time which elapsed until he heard the wagon start, and became aware that it was being driven through the doorway, he hardly dared to breathe. When the wagon turned up the street, still he did not know what to do in this sudden and favorable change of affairs. He finally determined to wait until the wagon stopped again, before he made any attempt to get out of his uncomfortable place of concealment.

"I'll give these chaps a scare," he said, half-smiling, "an' then run for liberty."

The next place where the wagon halted was at a hotel in Canal street, some streets away from the Tombs.

While one of the men was occupied with the horses the other happened to turn his head and he saw the top of one of the barrels lifted a little. His eyes stared, as they never did before, and he exclaimed:

"Der teufel's got into dot garbage."

"You pig fool," returned the other man, "dot beer's in your head."

Sharp Sam again raised the cover of the barrel to view the surroundings before he jumped out. This time both men saw the movement.

"Mein Gott!"

"Dot's a ghost!"

The critical moment for Sam had arrived. Up he rose from the barrel, and bounded out of it and down to the street before the astonished men could recover themselves.

"Dot poy lah not garbage," said one of the men.

"He lah a brisoner vrom de Tombs," added the other.

"Vell, vell, vat next?"

"Go in for de parrels, but don't tell nothin'. Dey might think ve helped de poy."

"I bromise."

Meanwhile Sharp Sam was out of sight.

CHAPTER XV.

BLACK KATE'S "CRIB."

SALLIE WORDEN was still in the same second story room in Black Kate's house. But her appearance was very different from what it was when we last saw her splendidly-attired person.

Without any delay, Black Kate proceeded to disrobe her prisoner.

"Laws, chile," she said, "it ain't right to wear such fixin's 'ere."

Sallie was still in a half-stupor. The effects of the chloroform were passing off, but it was leaving her in great physical distress, as well as lassitude.

"Where am I? Oh, I'm very sick," were her faintly-spoken words.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the old negress. "Whar is you? Not in de fine house where you was raised. Laws, no."

She began removing the costly articles of Miss Worden's attire. Their beauty fairly fascinated her, for she stopped repeatedly to examine them.

"Laws a-me!" she exclaimed, "what fine fixin's these rich people wear. Har's silk an' lace an' ribbins 'nough to set a poor thing like me crazy. I jest wish I had a yard or two for myself—I'd take it 'fore Dick Lacy comes over, but he'd be sure to find it out. 'Pears like he can allers find out what he wants to."

It was not only the exterior garments which were beautiful, but everything on the person of Miss Worden was of the finest and most costly make.

"Who ever hearn on't!" said Kate, looking at piece after piece. "Nothin' but finery. Won't dese 'ere bring lots o' money!"

A few articles of the cheapest materials were put upon Miss Worden. The transformation was very great.

"Thar," said the negress, "your own mother wouldn't know you. I could a'most pity you, but I won't."

A very sinister expression passed over the countenance of the negress. She compressed her lips and seemed excited.

"I hate—hate—hate rich people," she exclaimed. "Fore I became what I am, I asked 'em for bread, for shelter, but at every door I got a jawin'. Then I stole, and they put me in prison. Now I'm a devil, sure 'nough."

"Oh, I'm sick," moaned the victim, stretched so pallid and helpless on the bed.

"They've chloroformed you 'most to death. Lacy done told me to take good care of you, for de present. I must be doin' somethin' for you."

The negress left the room, locking the door behind her.

She was a woman of about fifty years of age, and of most forbidding appearance. She had small, pinched features, and only one eye. Her complexion was of the most intense blackness, so that when she became leagued with the thieves, she was at once called "Black Kate."

Her life had been a strange and somewhat romantic one. She was born a slave, but was traveling with other negroes and her master's family to another part of the country to settle. While passing through New York, the whole party of negroes were

spirited away, and could not be recovered, though a great effort was made through the Fugitive Slave Law, then in operation. Kate managed for a time to get along, but finally became very poor, and undertook to beg at the doors of the rich people of the city. She met with such rebuffs that, in her desperation, she stole some articles from the front of a store.

Six months' confinement on Blackwell's Island completed her ruin. She became a common thief, and, after several terms in the State Prison, fell in with Dick Lacy, who took her into the service of the gang, to live at the house in New Jersey, and carry out their plans over there.

She was wicked, and willing to be more so, from the outset. But Lacy did not trust altogether to this, but so managed that by her crimes she became completely in his power. She obeyed him without question, and there was, at this time, no more faithful worker in the plots of the gang than Black Kate.

Before the negress returned to the room, Miss Worden opened her eyes, and looked wildly about her.

"What place is this?" she asked. "I do not know the room. Am I traveling? Oh, how sick—sick I am."

She closed her eyes, and seemed utterly exhausted.

In a few moments the key turned in the lock, and Black Kate came in with a bottle and spoon in her hand.

Miss Worden started up in affright at the sight of the hideous creature, but instantly fell back again.

"De Lord sakes, miss! you can't git up," said Kate, not wishing to be too stern at first.

"Who are you?" whispered the sick woman.

"They allers calls me Black Kate."

"Do you live here?"

"Yes."

"Why am I here?"

"Cause de men wanted you."

"The men—what men?"

"De gang."

As the conversation progressed, Miss Worden seemed to revive a little, from the mere power of her determination to find out where she was. When she heard "men" and a "gang" mentioned, she raised herself, as if she would have sprung out of bed. She exclaimed, wildly:

"Oh, good woman, tell me what you mean? What has happened? Let me think!" here she pressed her brow in thought. "I went to the opera last night."

"For sure," replied Kate. "Den dey kidnapped you."

"Kidnapped me!" repeated Miss Worden.

"Dat ar de truth. I ain't gwine to keep nuffin' from you."

"What do they want with me?" demanded Miss Worden.

"Nuffin' 'cept to get money," said Kate. "Your father's rich, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Den he'll pay to get you back. You're gwine to stay with me till de boss o' de gang gets de money."

"I'll well pay you," said Miss Worden. "I have jewelry and rich clothing."

Kate laughed and replied:

"Laws a-me! you haven't a thing. We done took all dat 'fore you come to yourself."

"Do you rob people, too?" asked Miss Worden, with terror depicted in her face.

"Jest so," said the negress, with a grin.

"Oh, show me mercy!" exclaimed Miss Worden.

"You are a woman, feel for me—protect me—save me."

She clasped her hands, and looked up imploringly into the face of the negress.

"You rich folks don't show mercy," replied Kate, fiercely. "I went beggin' from door to door, an' nobody took pity on me. I hate—hate de rich, an' you belong to 'em."

Kate had worked herself into a passion, which made her face look more terrible than ever. Her eyes rolled and flashed, she wet her dry lips with her tongue, and she struck the bed with her clenched hand.

"Pears like I could tear you to pieces," she cried, glaring upon the frightened woman before her.

"Anyways, I'll shake you good."

Thus speaking, she caught hold of Miss Worden's shoulder, and shook her violently.

"Don't ask me for mercy," screamed Kate. "I only wish the boss would tell me to murder you. Thar, now, I feel better, an'—here she looked intently at Miss Worden—"you know me better."

Miss Worden was so shocked and overcome with the violence of action and language on the part of the negress, that she fell back pale and speechless.

"Now you take some o' dis medicine," said Kate, taking the bottle and spoon, which she had put on a table.

She poured it out, carefully.

"I doesn't want you should die jest yet. If you did, there'd be such swearin' I'd want to kill myself. Here, you, swallow this."

She held out the spoon, but Miss Worden's eyes were closed, and she made no effort to take the medicine.

"No foolin'," cried Kate, angrily, "or I'll force it down."

Still there was no notice taken by the sufferer.

"Law sakes!" exclaimed Kate; "then I'll have to make you open your mouf."

Without further words she roughly raised Miss Worden in the bed, and forced the medicine down her throat.

The picture of these two females at this moment was something striking. Pale and sick as one of them was, her delicacy and beauty became even

more apparent. Her long masses of hair fell over her shoulders, and the expression of her face was that of angelic suffering. The negress, in her anger, looked the impersonation of some fiend, who was equally hideous in person and in character. Her single eye glared wildly, and passion and malignity were made vivid in every line of her countenance.

The lamb was in the jaws of the wolf.

"There, now, it's down," cried Kate, allowing Miss Worden to fall back, without the slightest assistance.

The medicine acted quickly, and Miss Worden opened her eyes.

"It's curd's to see folks act so," said Kate, evidently pleased with the speedy results of the dose. "You is better already."

"Will you send a note to my father?" asked Miss Worden, faintly.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I ain't got nuffin' to do with sendin' notes. The boss will 'tend to dat."

"Has he written?" asked Miss Worden, with sudden hope.

"Dunno."

"Where is he?"

"In New York."

"Where is this place, then?"

"In New Jersey."

Miss Worden was in more astonishment than before. How it was possible for her to have been taken into New Jersey, when her last remembrance was of an evening at the opera, was more than she could understand.

"I suppose you'd like to eat somethin'," said Kate. "We never have much here, but we don't starve."

"I do not wish anything."

"Laws, don't you? I'm thinkin' you will 'fore long."

With a shrug of her shoulders, and a scowl, the negress now left the room, locking the door and taking out the key.

"My God!—my God!" exclaimed Miss Worden, as the tears coursed themselves down her cheeks.

"How could all this have happened? Where is Mr. Clark? Murdered, perhaps. Heavenly Father protect me now!"

She clasped her hands and closed her eyes, seemingly in prayer.

Meanwhile the negress went shuffling down-stairs. The house was a wooden structure and much out of repair. It had very little furniture, and both inside and outside presented a scene of neglect. There was a small piece of land connected with it, which was used for raising vegetables, this being the ostensible occupation of Black Kate and the man who lived in the house with her.

The place was on a back, lonely road, and few persons passed it. From time to time a wagon loaded with vegetables made its way to the neighboring places, where they were peddled. In this way the place did not fall under any suspicion, but the property belonged to the gang of thieves, and Black Kate and the man had been placed there to further their schemes of villainy.

When Black Kate came down-stairs she found Pete, her assistant on the premises, in one of the rooms, looking at the clothing which she had taken from the person of Miss Worden.

"Dee yer things mighty fine," said the man.

"Couldn't we hook suthin'?"

"You're jokin'," returned Kate.

"No, I ain't. De gang don't half pay us, anyways."

"Sure 'nough, Pete. I've been thinkin' of dat ar' myself."

"Dee boys am makin' money all de time. But dey don't give us much, no time. Dey say we makes money on de vegetables."

"We work hard to raise 'em, but dey don't pay nuffin'."

"De ground am poor."

"We're poor, too," said Kate, with a longing glance at the finery.

"Dat ar' lace am worth a heap," continued Pete.

"Sartin'."

"The boss wouldn't know it if we hooked a little on it," said Pete.

"He's awful sharp," returned Kate, "an' allers 'pectin' on us."

"He'll say we've got some of it, anyways. We'd as well make a dollar or two. Clip off some of dat lace, Kate."

"I'm gwine to, sure," replied the woman.

Taking out of her pocket a pair of scissors she ripped from the dress, in a way which would not be observed, a large piece of the lace.

"Now I'll put dese clothes right 'way," said Kate, as if fearful that she would be tempted to take something more. "Dis piece of lace you kin pawn when you take de next load o' vegetables."

CHAPTER XVI.

HOW SAM DODGES THE "COFS."

We left Sharp Sam running through the streets. Up one and down another, round corners and dodging obstructions—on he went. People looked at him, expecting to see him followed by a crowd for some misdeed, but no one seemed in pursuit. In fact, he soon began to realize that it would be more prudent not to attract attention by running at all. Just at this moment, a policeman came down a side street, right in Sam's path.

"What yer runnin' about?" he demanded.

"For exercise," cried Sam, as he darted off again.

"You're a thievin' young villain, I expect!" shouted the policeman, shaking his club. "I only wish I had been quick enough to get yer by the nape of the neck, I'd tak you in."

Sam was out of sight before he had concluded. He now looked upon a policeman as a sort of natural enemy, and he dreaded to encounter them.

"I'll go to Cherry street, and see Mrs. Miller an' the boys," he said. "Wonder what they've been doin' all this time?"

Going at a rapid walk he wended his way in the direction of Cherry street, which is on the east side of the city. As he came to familiar streets, his face brightened somewhat, and he remarked:

"It seems to me a long time since I was 'ere last, but it ain't, nuther. Oh, 'ere's old Cherry, as dirty as ever."

Mrs. Miller was engaged in getting a breakfast ready for her boys.

"That 'ere codfish smells nice," she said, as she bent over her stove in the operation of cooking it. "They like boiled fresh cod any time of day."

Then there came a knock at the door.

"Come in," she said, in a pleasant voice.

The door opened, and Sharp Sam appeared.

"Sharp Sam!" exclaimed the woman, starting back and dropping the fork she had in her hand.

"It's me."

"Have you been let out?"

"No," replied Sam, with a smile, as he closed the door. "I let myself out."

"Out of that dreadful Tomb?" asked the woman, in wonderment.

"Yes. How's your health, and how's the boys?"

"We're all well, thank God! But we've been awful cut up 'bout you. We wouldn't believe it."

"What?"

"Why, that you murdered and robbed that old woman. We couldn't think such a thing of you, Sharp Sam."

"I never did nothin', but I saw the man that did, an' I'm goin' to find him."

"Where is he, do you suppose?"

"I don't know, no more than the dead, but I'll find him if he's on top the earth. That'll clear me, you see."

"So it would, and I hope you will find him," said Mrs. Miller, with much feeling. "He's a bad man to do what he has done, and then let a boy, like you, be put in prison for it."

"The boys are out sellin' papers, I suppose?" said Sam.

"Oh, yes," replied the mother, with some pride, "they're up early and at it every morning. Why do you know, and here she smiled, "they never sold so many papers as when there was so much 'bout you."

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," I've heard somebody say," returned Sam.

There was a noise on the stairs.

"That's 'em," said the mother. "Won't they be surprised?"

The door flew open, and the two boys rushed in.

"Every paper's gone," they cried.

Then they stood transfixed for a moment, gazing upon Sam.

"Sharp Sam!"

"Sam!"

Then the three rushed together, and embraced and kissed and wept. Mrs. Miller looked on with tears in her own eyes.

"Sam has escaped," whispered Mrs. Miller.

"Jolly!" cried one boy.

"I'm so glad," said the other.

"Did you break out of that 'ere strong prison?" asked the eldest boy, whose name was Charles.

"Make a hole in the thick wall?" questioned the youngest, Walter by name.

"No," answered Sam, "a man in the cell helped me to get out of a window. See how I scratched my head in doin' it."

The boys looked at Sam in wonderment. He had been their playmate and friend, but now he stood before them a hero.

Mrs. Miller now thought of the breakfast, and said:

"You boys talk for a few minutes, while I dish up the codfish."

"Got codfish?" asked the youngest.

"Yes; you like it, don't you?"

"I like lots of it," returned the boy, smacking his lips.

"So does Sam."

"Well," said the busy mother, "I've got a big pot full of it. You've done so well with papers lately that I've had more money to spend for things to eat."

It was not long before the breakfast was on the table. The plates, and cups and saucers, were common and odd, but they were clean, and the tablecloth was as white as snow. When the delighted sons and their mother, and the no less happy, for the moment, Sam, were gathered about the table, it was a scene touching to contemplate. Mrs. Miller made a sign, when all bowed their heads, and she then asked a blessing.

"Now," she said, "we'll all eat hearty, with thankful hearts."

"Sam, are you hungry? I'm awful snapplish," said Charles.

"The things smell so good I'm getting hungry fast," replied Sam.

"Did you eat much in the Tomb?" asked Mrs. Miller.

"Not much. I felt half sick all the time."

"Give you codfish there?" was the question of Walter.

"Yes, on Fridays. Oh, there's plenty to eat, but it's a prison."

"I don't like prisons," said Walter.

"Be a good boy, and don't get into one," remarked the mother.

"Sam got in," answered the boy. "He's a good boy."

"Well, that was a mistake," said Mrs. Miller, not displeased to notice the intelligence of her son.

By this time they were all eating furiously. All were hungry, and the food was palatable.

Sam had entirely forgotten the dangers that still surrounded him. Here in the companionship of his old friends, he forgot that he was under an indictment for murder and an escaped prisoner. He had not even thought that he might be pursued to this very house.

"Mrs. Miller," he said, "this 'ere breakfast is splendid."

"More codfish," said one of the boys.

"More coffee," asked the other.

"A little more bread, ma'am," was the request of Sam.

"Eat hearty, all," urged Mrs. Miller. "I didn't know I'd have Sam to breakfast when I bought the fish last night."

"Then I was locked up fast and tight in the Tombs," returned Sam.

"Was it late when you got out?" asked Mrs. Miller.

"'Bout midnight when I squeezed through the window. Then I knocked 'bout the yard all night, and managed to get clear of that in a garbage barrel. They carried me right out in the wagon."

"Wonderful!" cried Mrs. Miller.

"Bully!" said the small boy, with his face all astonishment.

"Why, Sam," cried the older boy, "you're brave 'nough to fight the Ingins."

"What are you going to do?" said Mrs. Miller, with much anxiety, as if the thought had just occurred to her. "They'll look for you—perhaps come here."

"The policemen have been 'ere two or three times now," said the oldest boy.

"Mother was 'rested," added the youngest. "Oh, how we cried."

"I heard all 'bout that in the papers. I got 'em in the cell," replied Sharp Sam.

"What are you going to do?" again asked Mrs. Miller.

"Can't say," said Sam, mournfully, "I haven't made up my mind yet."

"Put him in the closet, mother," urged Walter.

"I know," spoke up Charles, "put him in the feather-bed, with plenty of bed-clothes over him."

They had pretty well satisfied their appetites, but, with one accord, the meal was now finished. Mrs. Miller and Sam looked the most uneasy, but the boys clearly comprehended that there was danger impending for Sam.

"I'll die 'fore I'll go back to that 'ere prison," said Sam.

"Where can I put you?" said Mrs. Miller, in great tribulation. "If they come here they will search every place."

"So they will," remarked Charles.

"Go to sea and catch whales," suggested Walter.

Sharp Sam was very uneasy. He got up and walked back and forth, with his hands thrust to the bottom of his pockets. Mrs. Miller and her sons were again crying.

"I'm at my wits' end to know what to do for you, Sam," said the good-hearted woman. "I'd hide you anywhere here, and not care for the consequences to myself, but I know they'd find you."

"No, I can't stay here," replied Sam, with great tears starting in his eyes. "I must go an' may never come back."

Here they all burst into violent crying. Mrs. Miller took her apron and covered her face, while her sons bent their heads upon the table, and cried as if their very hearts would break. Sam stood not far off, with his hands covering his face, and his body shaking with emotion.

"Oh, dear!—oh, dear!" cried Mrs. Miller.

"It's—it's aw—aw—ful," sobbed Charles.

"I never cried so much before, or felt so bad," said Walter.

To relieve her feelings, Mrs. Miller rose from her seat at the table, and went to the window. Her rooms were in front, but in the highest story. Looking down into the street, she saw that something unusual was going on. Then, putting her head out of the window, she saw that policemen were stationed at both ends of the block.

"Fly!" she cried; "the police are on the corners—the detectives will be here, right away."

Thus speaking, she caught Sam in her embrace, which he returned most earnestly. Next Charles and Walter rushed up to Sam, and the whole room was filled with their lamentations.

"Go to the roof, and trust to God," said Mrs. Miller.

"Farewell, all!" cried Sam, as he dashed in a half-bewildered way out of the room.

"Now stop crying, boys," said Mrs. Miller, drying her own tears; "when the detectives come in here we mustn't know anything about Sam."

In less than three minutes there was first a loud knock on the door, and before an answer could be made, it was rudely opened and two men entered.

"Where's your boy?" demanded one.

"Which boy?" demanded Mrs. Miller, wishing to gain as much time as possible.

"Sharp Sam."

"Don't know."

"We'll see."

"Who are you?"

"Detectives."

They went hastily through the rooms, looking into closets and corners, turning up beds, and sounding for holes in the floor and walls.

"The youngster's gone," said one of the men; "but he's been here."

"Why do you think so?" asked the other.

"It's plain enough," was the reply. "Look on the table, there, four have been eating, and there are only three of 'em here now."

"That's a fact."

"He didn't go down."

"Let's go to the roof. If he took that way, we've got him, dead sure."

This remark caused a pang to the three interested listeners.

Leaving the room, the detectives went to the roof. It was a high, dizzy place. These tenement houses are built five and six stories high, towering far above buildings of the ordinary size.

The officers looked for some time, but did not find the object of their search.

"It's strange where the young imp has gone to," said one of the officers. He couldn't have got out, in front or rear, for it's all guarded."

"Ha! what's that I see?" cried the other rushing to one of the chimneys.

In a moment Sharp Sam darted from behind the chimney, which he had all this time managed to keep between himself and the officers, by moving round it.

Now he was discovered, and the race for freedom began.

He darted first one way and then another.

"Surrender, you vagabond!" cried the officer nearest to him.

"Never!" said Sam.

Suddenly he ran to the rear gutter, crawled over it, and clutching the outside pipe began to descend by it.

So desperate was this resource of the boy that the officers, accustomed to thrilling scenes as they were, stood irresolute with alarm.

"He'll be dashed to pieces."

"The pipe is certain to give way."

Thus they spoke, as the brave boy continued to go down hand over hand.

"If he gets down, they'll nab him in the yard," now said one of the officers.

"Oh, he won't. If the pipe don't break his strength will give out."

Nearer and nearer to the ground came brave Sam, but it was a long distance.

At this juncture an officer appeared in the yard. It seemed as if nothing could save Sam when he got down.

"I believe he'll make the trip," said one of the officers on the roof. "It's the bravest thing I ever saw."

When Sam was a few feet from the ground a piece of the pipe gave way, and he fell with it in his hands. Rising up, he struck the officer in the yard with this missile, and dashed over a neighboring fence.

"Well," exclaimed one of the officers on the roof, excitedly, "that takes my time."

"Let's go down," said the other. "I'm not so sure of the capture of that 'ere boy."

They hastily descended.

"You didn't find him?" remarked Mrs. Miller, as they passed her door.

"Yes, we did," replied one of them; "but he's gone down by the gutter."

"Thank God!" exclaimed the woman, while her sons danced about her in delight.

"Bully boy!" cried Charles.

"I'd been 'fraid," said Walter.

They returned to the window to watch events in the street. A great crowd of people filled the street, for the object of the visit of the police had circulated far and near. Every window was also crowded, and the greatest excitement prevailed throughout the largely-populated neighborhood.

Reaching the other side of the fence, Sam staggered and seemed ready to fall from absolute weakness. But it was only for an instant, for he knew that his pursuers were still near at hand.

Before him was the open door of a warehouse, of which there are many in that part of the city. Without hesitation he ran in here, and found himself in a long passageway between tiers of cotton bales. His first inclination was to hide here, but he said:

"They'll only hunt me out. I'll go on."

Next he came to a smaller passage between the bales, and, at the end of it, he saw a window.

"I'll go this 'ere way," he said, as he entered this small passage.

The window, to his joy, opened upon a small yard, into which he jumped. Then he went into the cellar of another building, and, going in the direction of a light, he emerged upon a side street.

The extraordinary means of escape taken by Sharp Sam had confused the police. At a distance, too, the guard was not so well kept up, for it was expected at these outposts that the arrest would be made in the tenement-house.

Consequently, when Sharp Sam reached this side street, he saw, in the distance, the policemen and a large number of people moving about, but there was no guard in this street in the direction of the river.

"Now's my chance," he said, taking in the situation at a glance.

Away he went, with the speed of the wind. Breathing hard, and holding his side from pain, he would not allow himself to stop, but ran with all the power left in him.

He glanced right and left, expecting every moment to encounter a policeman.

Providence, however, was on the side of the poor, hunted boy. He reached the river in safety, and ran down on one of the wharves. One might have thought that in his desperation he intended to jump overboard. But such was not his intention.

"I know a place," he muttered. "The tide's out, an' I can hide under the wharf."

Over the string-piece, and down one of the piles, went the boy. Then, like a hunted animal, he curled himself on the wet stones beneath the wharf, and said:

"Safe at last."

Meanwhile the police searched the warehouse, found the open window, followed through the cellar, and at length realized that the boy had escaped.

"He's off and no mistake," said one of the detectives.

"This here's a poor business," remarked the other. "What'll they say at head-quarters when they hear we've been fooled by a boy?"

"Well," said the other, "the same boy got out of the Tombs. They know he's no slouch."

By this time it became known to the people that the boy had effected his escape. The information was received with great satisfaction, for there had already arisen a great deal of sympathy for Sharp Sam in the city, especially among the poorer classes.

"He's a brave fellow."

"I don't believe he committed any murder."

"I'm glad he's off, anyway."

Such was the nature of the conversation among the people, as they scattered to their homes and working places.

When Mrs. Miller saw the crowd moving away she sent down her son Charles for information. Directly he came running back, exclaiming:

"Oh, mother, Sam's got away!"

"God be praised!" cried Mrs. Miller, reverently uplifting her eyes.

"I'm so glad," said Walter, as he turned a summerset on the floor.

"May Heaven protect him wherever he may go!" said Mrs. Miller.

"Amen!" solemnly said the boys.

CHAPTER XVII.

\$50,000 FOR SALLIE!

THE day following Miss Worden's abduction had closed without the police gaining any information about her. The detectives gave sage opinions, and thought they could lay their hands on the men, but, one by one, they came back to head-quarters without anything more than what might prove to be slight clews.

Mr. Worden was in the deepest apprehension of evil, and Mrs. Worden had been prostrated in bed since the intelligence was first conveyed to her.

Clark had been busy in the matter all day. The police did not suspect him, in any manner, with complicity in the affair, but were rather impressed with him as a gentleman.

"You see," said the Superintendent of Police to Clark, when he called late on this day, "this thing is rather a new crime here. We know of people who carry off children, but they are not the operators in this affair. It is a deep-laid plot, formed and managed by bold and skillful men, but I must confess that the records of the Department do not contain information of any persons who have been engaged in anything like it before."

"What bold fellows they must be," said Clark, with great complacency, considering his own part in it.

"It is a new crime committed by old heads in villainy."

"Yes, I should think so," returned Clark, with the manner of one who abhorred all evil doings.

"But we shall catch 'em," continued the Superintendent; "and when we do, we'll railroad 'em to the State Prison."

"I wish you great and immediate success, Mr. Superintendent. I will not occupy any more of your valuable time."

Then the deep schemer withdrew. Getting into his cab at the door, he muttered:

"I'm playing with fire—I'm going into the very den of the lion. Suppose any chance clew should point to me? There is that other affair, too. But I will have no apprehension, and, at all events, keep the same bold front which has already served me so well."

He drove to Mr. Worden's house. There he found that gentleman pacing the parlor and waiting for him.

"My dear sir, I regret to say that there is no news," said Clark.

"I have received an important letter," said Mr. Worden, excitedly.

"Indeed?"

"Yes, from the leader of the abductors."

"What does he say?"

"Read it for yourself."

Mr. Worden then handed a letter to Clark, which he opened and began to read. It ran as follows:

"NEW YORK, 18—.

"MR. WORDEN:

"RESPECTED SIR: We respect your feelings, as a father, too much to do any wrong to your daughter. She is in our hands, but safe from harm, if you do the right thing. We don't want her, but some money. You have plenty of it. You won't mind paying to get her back. We are poor men. Our price for her return is fifty thousand dollars. What do you say? Put your answer in the *Herald*, for

"SNAKE."

"It is a great relief to know that Miss Worden is unharmed," said Clark.

"I would not trust such wretches an hour," replied Mr. Worden.

"Oh, yes, you may," returned Clark. "This letter shows the whole plot. It is money, as the police sergeant said, and not your daughter that these men want. While they are negotiating for that, she will not be molested."

"I will pay the money," said Mr. Worden.

A secret pleasure pervaded the bosom of Clark at this announcement, as a part of it was to come to him. He remarked:

"I supposed that you would do so."

"Please write an answer, and I will send it to the newspaper office."

"With pleasure."

Certainly "with pleasure," for Clark never was more anxious to do a service in his life than this one, which promised the complete success of his latest plan of money-getting.

Going with Mr. Worden to the library, he soon wrote off this:

"SNAKE—Terms agreed to. Name time and place."

A servant was immediately sent to the newspaper office with the advertisement.

"Could we not arrange a trap for these villains?" said Mr. Worden.

"In what way?" asked Clark, carelessly.

"Why, have the police ready to apprehend whoever receives this money."

Clark affected to be reflecting on some plan to circumvent the kidnappers, but, in reality, he was preparing to drive this new and dangerous idea out of Mr. Worden's head.

"It seems to me," he said, at length, "that while such a plan might save your money, it might endanger your daughter."

The arrow struck in the tender heart of the father, where Clark intended it should lodge.

"Then we will do nothing of the kind," cried Mr. Worden, instantly. "I do not care for the money—oh, no, I would give the last dollar I have for the redemption of my dear child—but I thought it would be a blessed thing to catch these scoundrels."

"I advise good faith with them," said Clark, firmly.

"I owe it to your kindness in this sad matter to follow your counsel to the letter. I can never repay you for your considerate attentions and valuable assistance."

"Do not mention it," said Clark, with cool hypocrisy.

Was ever anything more strange than the circumstances which favored this man Clark, in his plans? Acting a two-faced part, involved in this desperate piece of villainy himself, still here he was writing, by the direction of Mr. Worden, the answer to the letter of his confederates, and also using his influence to save them from arrest.

Having inquired, most sympathetically, about the condition of Mrs. Worden, and given further assurances of the speedy and satisfactory termination of the whole trouble, Clark prepared to take his leave, saying:

"I must nurse myself a little to-night. That fellow's blow has shaken me from head to foot. Good-night, sir."

"Good-night, my dear friend," replied Mr. Worden, warmly grasping the extended hand of the other.

Seated in his cab, a few moments later, Clark ejaculated:

"Was ever a man so deceived? Ha, ha, ha!"

Next morning the advertisement appeared, but no further developments took place.

On the morning of the following day, Mr. Worden received another letter, in the same hand-writing as the first, in these words:

"MR. WORDEN:

"Sir: We have seen your advertisement. At the same time, we know that the police are working in the case. Don't trifle with us. We are desperate men. Call off the police hounds. We must wait a bit. Can't trust you yet."

SNAKE."

Mr. Worden found himself in a dilemma. It was evident that these men had means of knowing what the police were doing, and it was now necessary that he should refrain from promptings them to any further efforts. On the other hand, it was quite impossible to admit the police to a knowledge of his own negotiations. At all events, he determined to reply to the letter, through the paper.

The next day this advertisement appeared:

"SNAKE—Have no fear. All is confidential between us."

Mr. Worden also had several interviews with the Superintendent and detectives. While he did not dare to request a cessation of their investigations, he hinted that, possibly, if the men were not alarmed, overtures for some ransom might be made.

"Your object is to get back your daughter," said the Superintendent, rather sharply, on hearing Mr. Worden's expressions, "but we have a duty to discharge to the law and the community. A crime has been committed, and the perpetrators must be apprehended, if they can be found."

"A greater crime may be committed if my daughter is not rescued from the power of these men," replied Mr. Worden.

"We can neither consider that nor allow you to compound a felony, if we know it," returned the Superintendent.

"Of course you must do your duty," said Mr. Worden, as he rose to conclude the interview.

As he went homeward he was exceedingly troubled. He foresaw that the deliverance of his daughter would now be exceedingly difficult. The abductors were wary, and the police would continue their efforts in all directions.

Next day Mr. Worden received a letter, in these words:

"MR. WORDEN:

"Sir: You went to the police too quick. Now they are keen on the scent. We can't move. Keep shady till you hear again."

SNAKE."

The fact was that Dick Lacy and several of his gang were under the suspicion of the police, and had been shadowed for a day or two. Hence their unwillingness to move further in the matter, at present.

The delay and anxiety were terrible for both Mr. and Mrs. Worden. Their friends could not comfort them.

Clark, from his position with both parties, was well aware of the entire situation, and, prudently, determined to await events.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHARP SAM THE JOCKEY.

SHARP SAM slept long and soundly on his bed of rough stones under the wharf. Soon after reaching the place exhausted nature had asserted its prerogative, and the poor boy had fallen asleep, with his arm for a pillow. For the time all his troubles were forgotten, and it might even be supposed that he had some pleasant dream, for his face brightened and he looked happy. But the awakening, with its terrors of renewed apprehensions, must come at last. It came when the rising tide reached the spot where he lay, and the cold water penetrated to his skin.

Then he rose up, and rubbed his eyes. It was night, and beneath the wharf, looking across the river, he could see the lights in the streets of Brooklyn.

"Golly, how I shiver," he said, "an' I'm all wet 'bout the feet and legs. The tide's up an' it's in the night. What a sleep I've had. I feel better for it, too. Night is a good time for me to put out of the city. Can't stay here."

He climbed up to the top of the wharf.

"I wish I had a few pennies to get some coffee and cakes," he said, as he reached the street. "I'm hungry."

He walked on some distance, shivering and uncomfortable. Then he espied a man carrying a valise. Going up to him, he said:

"Mister, let me carry your baggage. I'm cold and hungry."

"Well, I don't care, my lad, if ye do," returned the man, handing the article to Sam. "I'm in a hurry to get to the Catherine Ferry. When a man's been a long time away from his wife and little ones, he don't mind a trifle to get along faster. Heave ahead, my lad."

"As fast as you like, sir," said Sam, lifting the heavy valise to his shoulder and starting off briskly.

He was very glad when he reached the ferry gate, but he forgot all about his fatigue when he heard the man say:

"You're a smart lad. Here, I don't mind half a dollar."

"Thank you, captain," said Sam, with a bounding heart. "I'm off for some coffee and cakes."

The hungry boy was soon seated in one of the cellars of that neighborhood, where they sell hot coffee and cakes at a low price.

As Sam was very hungry, and he felt quite rich with the sum of fifty cents in his pocket, he indulged in not only one cup of coffee and a plate of cakes, but he duplicated his order, much to the surprise of the waiter. When the man brought the fresh supply, he remarked, jokingly:

"You dine hearty, young feller."

"After my drive in the Central Park," said Sam, in a broad smile, "I feel the want of a good square meal."

"You've been out with your four-in-hand, I suppose?"

"Yes; it's painted red, and the horses are of several other colors. You might have noticed us at the turnout of the coachin' club."

"You'll do," said the man, as he went off, laughing.

"It's a good while," said Sam, "since I joked with anybody. I'm feelin' bully."

Now he went forth again. Up one street, then through another, and finally he came to an avenue where the horse-cars were running.

"I'll take a ride," he suddenly exclaimed. "It don't cost much."

He jumped on one of the passing cars, took a seat, and soon paid his fare. He had a nice corner, and he went to sleep. How long his nap continued he did not know, but he was finally aroused by the conductor shaking him roughly, and saying:

"Come, you can't get any more ride for your money."

"Where am I?" he demanded, rubbing his eyes.

"Harlem Bridge. Come, run home," answered the conductor.

Sam did not tell him that he had no home, but the remark painfully reminded him that however much he might sleep and dream of happy homes, he could only awake a vagabond, after all.

He scampered out of the car, with a heavy heart. Not knowing or caring where he went, he pushed off in the direction of the bridge which he saw before him.

He wandered all night, determined to get as far from the city as possible by daylight.

"I'll get some work out 'ere where they won't think of lookin' for me," said Sam.

At dawn he threw himself, footsore and miserable, upon the ground outside of Jerome Park.

This place is the property of the New York Jockey Club, to which most of the rich horse owners of the city belong, and its Spring and Fall meetings are attended by great crowds of fashionable and other people. The stakes amount, in the aggregate, to a very large sum of money, and, consequently, all the prominent stables of race-horses are twice a year brought to the place.

Ample, and the very best accommodations for these valuable animals are provided. With them come a host of boy jockeys, trainers, and other stable attendants, so that for some time before the races, the Park, especially in the vicinity of the stables, is the scene of constant bustle and excitement. Several of the most noted strings of horses come

from the South, and the attendants, in these cases, are negroes. The boys who ride are often very comical, not only in appearance, but in conversation.

On this morning, bright and early, the trainers had their horses out in different parts of the Park, for exercise, and to test their speed. At the stable doors, and in various positions on the ground, were the comical-looking jockeys, watching the proceedings, and making, in their own way, comments upon the movements of the magnificent racers.

"Hi!" cried a little gaunt negro boy, "that ar' Nancy's showin' her steps dis mornin'."

"Yo' won't get nuffin out of her on de last mile," said another thin little black boy, in a tone of disparagement.

"What'll you bet on dat?" demanded the other.

"Go 'way, nigger," said the champion of Nancy; "t'ink dis chille bet wid yo' Pay dat last bet fust—'spect I got some sense."

Then the whole of them began to whistle, sing and skylark with each other, looking and acting more like monkeys than human beings.

They turned summersets so fast that they looked like the spokes of moving wheels, they stood on their heads, and leaped one over the other.

In their sports chance brought them to the place where Sharp Sam was still lying asleep. Discovering him, through an opening in the fence, it took only a moment for them to bound into the road at his side.

"Hi, boy!" said one of them, shaking Sam, "yo' wake up. Sun up long 'go."

Sam opened his eyes, and when he saw the group of black faces over him cried out, in alarm:

"Devils, git out!"

"Debils," repeated another of the boys, "we a'n't debils—we's jockeys. Haw, haw!"

"Haw, haw!"

"Ho, ho!"

Sam rose to his feet in a hurry at all this. He was still somewhat frightened at the strange-looking and acting group about him, but, after all, could hardly help laughing at their queer doings.

"Who's yo'," asked the first speaker.

"A boy out of work."

"Any daddy an' mammy?" inquired another boy.

"No."

"Ken yo' ride a hoss?" again questioned the first boy.

"Do anythin'."

"Come up to de boss, den. He done told me he wantin' a white boy."

"I'll go," said Sam, with a brightening face.

The whole party now scampered off, entering the Park, and then going in the direction of the stables.

"Where do you come from?" asked Sam.

"From de Souf," answered a boy, at his side.

"Where's that?"

"Dat's Kentuck and 'Ginny."

"Is it a long way off?"

"Golly, yes, dat it am. Heep o' black people down dar an' fast hosses."

The jockeys now began to play pranks again. They wrestled, butted with their heads, danced, jumped, talked and laughed, until they fairly exhausted themselves. Sam laughed until his sides pained him.

"What a queer lot you boys are," he said.

"Yo' called us debils," said one of the boys.

"Now, I'll call you friends," returned Sam.

"We'll be fren's till you 'pose on us an' den we'll lick yo'."

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Haw, haw!"

Thus the merriment continued until the stables were reached. Sam was immediately interested in the fine horses he saw, some standing blanketed and others exercising. At one period of his life he had been in the employ of a New York grocer, and had in this way already acquired some knowledge of horses. Going up to one of the animals he patted him, and said:

"I never touched a racer 'fore in my life."

"We rides 'em in de big races," said one of the little jockeys, proudly. "Thousands of people in de Park lookin' on and cheerin' us."

"I wish I could ride a race," cried Sam, with enthusiasm.

"Yo' ken, if de boss takes a fancy dat ar' way. Dar he is now."

Sam saw a very plain-looking man coming out of one of the stables. He was old, and somewhat feeble, while his dress was common and shabby.

"Dat ar' man," said the boy, almost reverentially, "is ole John Harper, of Kentuck. He's got a splendid plantation down dar, an' owns de fastest race-horses in de world. Now, hold up yo' head an' answer like a man. Den yo' git de place."

The old man walked up to a racer, and putting his arm about the animal's neck drew it up to his person in the most affectionate manner. The horse appeared to be thoroughly, and gave a whinny in return. Mr. Harper spent most of his time with his horses, even sleeping in the stables at the race-courses, and the animals all knew him.

The little jockey now introduced Sam, and the horse-owner was very well satisfied with the answers made to his questions by the applicant for the vacant place.

"You're a poor white critter," said the old man, "an' I'll give you a chance. Remember that a race-horse is suthin' more than a common horse. They're a heap smarter an' nobler than many men. I reckon you'll treat 'em well. Come with me, an' I'll show you suthin' to do."

"Dat ar' big pot de place without much fussin'," said the jockey.

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Ho, ho!"

Then the whole party followed Mr. Harper and Sam.

CHAPTER XIX.
RACES AND FACES.

RACE DAY at Jerome Park is one of the fashionable events of New York life. The ride up Fifth avenue, through the Central Park, and then out by the boulevards, crossing Harlem river, and then on again by the fine avenue leading to the Park, is one not excelled in attractiveness by any other in the world.

There is a solid moving mass of vehicles, drawn by magnificent horses, and occupied by gay and fashionable people. Thousands of other persons go by the railroad trains.

Within the Park the scene is beautiful and animating in the extreme. The Club House and Grand Stand, with their crowds of fashionably-dressed people, the vehicles of all kinds rolling along to places, and then, the curving race-track, and the stretch of green lawns and slopes, which, together, make up a rare picture of life and beauty.

The excitement increases as the blooded contestants in the first race are led forth. The white and black jockeys, each clad in a jacket and cap of different bright colors, have to be weighed.

Mr. Harper had one of the fastest horses in his stable in the first race of this day. The negro boy who had taken the most interest in Sam was to ride the animal, as he had often done before with success, and Sam himself was allowed to go to the track, as one of the attendants. Sam was dressed in jockey costume, and in every way presented an improved appearance. Quite an intimacy had already grown up between the two boys, and when they were leaving the stable, Bob, the black boy, remarked:

"Don't yo' feel fine? Wouldn't know yo' for de same boy as we found dat ar' mornin'."

"I'm happy," said Sam.

"Haw, haw!" laughed Bob. "H'ar dem people cheer. They've cotched sight o' de racers."

The scene inspired Sam very much. He had never seen or imagined anything like it before. Then when he looked at himself in his gay clothing, and realized that he was personally to figure in the grand affair, he felt the first real sensation of pride which he had, probably, ever experienced.

The racers pranced about with their large clear eyes, looking an intelligence which was almost human.

"I'll win to-day, sure," said Bob. "I done bet a hul month's wages on my ridin' de winner."

"I ain't got nothin' to bet, as I only got victuals and clothes to start on," said Sam.

"Yo' can't 'joy a race without yo' bet. Why, up dar at de pool-sellin' dey go on like mad, an' on de Grand Stand de ladies bets gloves an' money, too."

"Heap o' money on dis 'ere race," remarked another of the boys. "Every nigh in de stables got suthin' on it."

By this time the weighing place had been reached. The jockeys were weighed, and the official record made by the proper person. They try to keep themselves as light as possible, so as not to go over the carrying weight of the horses.

Very soon after this, the horses entered for the first race were skillfully placed in line, and the word to go was given.

A great cheer went up from the thousands, and there was a clapping of hands which ran along the brilliant row of ladies, as all saw that the start was a good one, and that the race had begun in earnest.

"Go it, Bob!" screamed Sam, with all his breath.

"Hi, hi, hi!" shouted the negroes.

With their sleek coats shining in the sun, with necks elongated, and every physical power in its most perfect action, the racers sped onward. The little jockeys, some white and some black, clung to the horses as if themselves a part of the animals, while their bright-colored jackets and caps enabled the spectators to know, even in the furthest distance of the winding course, the positions of all the horses.

Presently they were on the home stretch. The excitement on all sides was increasing. At different points the horses had changed positions, and as they were all running finely, the last quarter-mile was to tell the tale of victory.

The people became wild. Men shouted until they had no voice for any further effort, and the ladies clapped their hands, waved their handkerchiefs, and seemed not less frantic than the others.

Paunting and perspiring at every pore on came the racers. The jockeys on the horses shouted and whipped, for the crisis was at hand.

In a moment the heat was decided. Then went up shouts and cheers which made the welkin ring.

"Bob has got the heat!" exclaimed Sam.

"See him bowin' to de people," said one of the other negro jockeys. "Dey lud de boy dat wins 'em money."

Soon the horses were off for the second heat.

About this time Sam turned his attention to the people on the Grand Stand, more than he had before. Suddenly he seemed startled, and gazed fixedly at one place, and, in fact, at one person.

"It is the murderer!" he exclaimed, excitedly.

In an instant he ran in the direction of the Grand Stand.

Unconscious that any such recognition of him had taken place, Clark, the murderer, was in a prominent place on the Grand Stand enjoying the race.

He saw the white and black jockeys, and laughed at their appearance and pranks, but he had no conception that one of them was the only being in the world who could recognize and identify him as the murderer of Mrs. Beckman.

Meanwhile the excited boy was trying to find his way to him. His purpose was to denounce him then and there as the perpetrator of the bloody deed.

But the hour for retribution had not yet come

When the boy reached the entrance to the Grand Stand he was stopped by a policeman.

"No jockeys allowed here," said the man, roughly. Sam was so intent upon his purpose that he paid no attention, but attempted to run past the man. The next instant he was stretched out insensible from a blow of the club.

When he came to himself, he was in the stable. The races of the day were over, and the people had left the Park.

Bob had won the first race.

CHAPTER XX.
POOR SALLIE!

MORE than a week had now elapsed since Miss Worden's abduction. Each day had been filled with terror and anxiety to her, in the upper room at Black Kate's, where she was still held as a prisoner.

As time wore on she began to give up all hope of release. The negro did not improve in manners or temper, but constantly added indignity to the other distresses of the gentle-bred woman.

One morning Kate entered the room, with a very meager breakfast, and said:

"Boss Lacy down sta'rs, an' he's comin' up to see you."

"I don't want to see him," replied Miss Worden, in alarm, for she had long since been told who the man was, but had never seen him.

"Dat don't make no difference. He's mad, too, an' yo're sure to kotch it. He says we have to feed you too long."

"Why don't he let me go then?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the woman, "wouldn't you like to go? Seems to me you don't preclude what I've done for you. I might have made it a heap wus for you."

Miss Worden made no reply. In her experience this hideous old woman came as near to a human monster as any being could be, and when she was told that it might have been still worse for her, she could only keep silent and tremble.

"Eat your breakfast," said Kate. "an' then de boss will come up. I'll boun' he'll talk plain to you."

Thus speaking she went away.

Miss Worden was very weak and sadly needed food, but, with the prospect of a visit from Lacy before her, she found it impossible to eat anything.

She waited in much agitation.

Shortly Kate and Lacy entered the room.

"Dar she is," said Kate, "sulkin' as usual. Boss, she ain't grateful for nuffin'."

"Good mornin'," said Lacy, with a scowl. "I hope Black Kate treats you well."

"Oh, sir," cried Miss Worden, in a sudden outburst, which she could not control, "why am I not liberated?"

"Confound it," replied Lacy, "for half a dozen reasons. You know we ask money for your return, and we can't get hold of it."

"My father will surely pay it."

"He says he will, but the police are watchin' so infernal sharp that we can't get together. That's what the trouble is."

"Let me go, and I will pledge my life that you shall have the money."

"Boss," said Kate, "she thinks you is green."

"The best pledge, miss," replied Lacy, "is your own person. We've got it, an' we intend to keep it."

"Not long," said Miss Worden, solemnly.

"As long as we please; who's to hinder, I'd like to know."

"The good God above," replied Miss Worden, pointing upward. "I will soon die from grief and ill-treatment."

"Ill-treatment," repeated Kate, in a rage, "why you ungrateful thing. You've fared like a lady here. Boss done told me to be gentle with you, an' I've most worn myself out waitin' on you."

"I suppose you have done as well as you know how," returned Miss Worden, "but your heart is not a kind one."

This remark was an imprudent one, but Miss Worden was so weak and agitated that for the moment she did not seem to care what she said.

"Oh, you wretch!" screamed the negroes, "to say dat ar' to my very face."

"Silence, Kate," commanded Lacy, "you do as I tell you, an' never mind what she says."

"Sir, have you a child?" asked Miss Worden.

"No," replied Lacy, roughly.

"I was going to ask you in case you had to think of my poor parents, torn as I have been from them."

"Well, you needn't try to touch my feelings. That sort of game won't do. A man in the business that I am in never feels—no, never."

"Have you no heart?"

"No."

"But you have a soul," urged Miss Worden, staring at him as if she would look him through.

"Oh, bother," cried Lacy, "I'm too old a bird to be caught with any such chaff. You can't melt me by any such gab as yo're indulgin' in."

"She 'nuses me," said Kate, with an ugly leer.

"Dat's the way she's allers talkin' to me. Why, if I had been soft-hearted she'd have got out long 'go. That's her game, but she can't play it on dis nig-ger."

"I'm sure she can't, or I wouldn't trust her here," said Lacy.

"She's real aggravatin'" cried Kate. "I never saw a harder gal to deal with."

"I want you to write a letter to your father," said Lacy, addressing Miss Worden.

"Gladly will I do it," was her reply.

"We have been carrying on a correspondence with him. But the whole affair is difficult to arrange, and it is necessary for your father to exert whatever influence he has to get the police out of

the way. We think that a letter from you will stir him up."

"I will write it," said Lacy, producing them. "Here are pencil and paper," said Lacy, producing them. "Copy what is on this other piece of paper." He handed her a dirty slip with something written on it.

Miss Worden took the piece of paper and read aloud as follows:

"DEAR FATHER: I am sick, and in great danger. If the money is not paid I will be murdered."

"YOUR DAUGHTER."

"Murdered," she repeated, looking up at Lacy with terror depicted in her own face.

"You might as well understand your case," said Lacy. "Dead men tell no tales—neither do women."

"Oh, God!—oh, God!" cried the terrified lady.

"Nothin' can help you," said Lacy, "but your father's money paid to us. If that fails to come before long then we must dispose of you. We can't feed you forever, an' we don't intend to keep this trouble hangin' over our own heads any longer than it can be helped. We've spent lots of money on it now, an' all the boys are angry over it."

"Ah, miss," broke in Kate, with one of her most sardonic grins, "I done told you dar was a rod in pickle for you. Now you believe it, I reckon."

"Write the letter," said Lacy.

The shocked and bewildered woman took the pencil and paper, and, through her almost blinding tears, wrote the terrible words. Then she fell back in a swoon.

"Ha, gal," said the negroes, "you've got one breakin' in dis day."

Lacy took possession of the letter, saying:

"I'll send this to the old man by post."

Without the slightest further consideration for the insensible woman, the two left the room. Outside, Kate remarked:

"She's allers in dem spells. I'm tired of dat gal, anyhow."

"So am I an' the rest of the gang," returned Lacy. "We're sorry we went into this abduction business, at all."

"It makes a heap of trouble for me. Oh, how I hate dat ar' gal."

"You wouldn't mind puttin' her down cellar?"

"Boss, I wouldn't," said Kate, in a hoarse whisper.

"Sometimes dar has been things done here dat made me sort o' sorry, but I ain't got no 'punctions 'bout dat ar' gal."

"You hate your own sex?"

"I do! I do!" cried Kate; "specially when dey 'long to de rich folks. Den I could kill—kill forever."

As the negroes spoke, her eyes dilated, and her veins swelled like some angry animal.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE PUZZLED GANG.

CONFUSION and alarm existed in Dick Lacy's gang. As the saying is, they found that they had an elephant on their hands. Desperate men, as they were, the possibility of their having to make way with the abducted woman was not at all pleasant to contemplate. They had crimes enough to answer for, now, without undertaking one which would only be the bloody end of a scheme which had brought no money to compensate for the taking of life.

All New York, and, in fact, the whole country was in a state of excitement.

"Can a woman be carried off in this bold manner without the detection of the culprits?" asked every paper in the land. Abuse, ridicule and threats were hurled upon the police on every side. As a consequence, they were spurred to their utmost efforts to ferret out the matter, but, as yet, they had succeeded in nothing to satisfy either themselves or the public.

In this emergency, in which they found themselves placed, a meeting of the gang had been called at Lacy's house.

One by one they came to the room in which we have before seen them. Beer and pipes were on the table, and Dick's wife urged each, as he came in, to "Help yourself, an' treat in your turn."

The men looked surly and restless.

At length the room was full of men—desperate, bloodthirsty-looking fellows, every one of them. Some were quite young, too.

"Heard the news from the Sessions to-day?" said Dick Lacy, in a somewhat excited tone.

"No," said all.

"Tall Mike's gone up. Our lawyers couldn't save him."

"What did he get?" asked the man Jacobs.

"Ten years. There's no mercy for an old offender like him."

"Yas he much put out?" asked the ugly man.

"Yas, he was, I'm told," replied Lacy. "He thought he could prove an alibi."

"Dose don't go down, no more," said the ugly man.

"Well—well," said the woman, "I think Tall Mike is not the man he used to be. Look how that 'ere kid fooled him."

"Sure enough," said Jacobs.

"Why," continued the woman, "I took an awful lot of trouble to get the things in the Tombs to get that 'ere kid out, 'cause he was comin' to help us."

"An' he never came near us," said Lacy.

"Vell, I say dat young 'un is the sharpest boy in New York," said the ugly man.

"So he is," was the general exclamation.

"I've some more news," said Lacy—"bad news, too."

"Before you tell it, give us another round of beer," cried a big fellow.

"So I will—I've got plenty to-night," said the woman.

They all partook of more beer, and most of them replenished their pipes with tobacco.

"Ten more detectives have been put on the abduction case," said Lacy. "The Superintendent says he'll find out who carried off the woman, or he'll arrest every suspected man in New York."

"I tried to keep you out of that sort of business," said the woman, with a significant nod of satisfaction. "It's none of my doings."

"Jacobs put us up to that job," returned Lacy, looking at that individual.

"It was a big thing," cried Jacobs. "Remember how splendidly it worked, with the assistance of the gentleman who first mentioned the job to me."

"That 'ere person you speak 'bout," cried the woman, "is struttin' 'bout town while we're tremblin'."

"Mark me," said Lacy, "if this thing does involve us—if the police hunt the game to our den, this man goes down with the rest. He was to share in the plunder, an' he shall share in the punishment."

"I wish we'd kept to crackin' banks."

"An' knockin' down on the highway."

"An' forgery of bonds."

"Anythin' was better than stealin' a woman," said Dick's wife. "Now you don't know how to turn. Here's precious time lost for other work. There's a dozen places down on the list to crack, and nobody is crackin' 'em."

"Shut up!" cried Lacy, provoked at the woman's tirade, "your tongue will get you in trouble before you know it."

"She's right," said one.

"She's always right," asserted another.

"Thank'e, Bill," replied the woman to this last speaker.

"Vat's to be done, Lacy?" asked the ugly man.

"I'm tired of this gabblin'."

"Well," returned the leader, with a troubled face, "the thing is how to get hold of that chap's money. My first plan was to have it paid to me in some way. The sum is a large one, and I didn't care to trust anybody else with it before the division."

"That's 'cordin' to the rules," said a member.

"Dick, you've never gouged us a penny," remarked another.

"Why, boys," cried Dick, with sudden feeling, "I'm wearin' myself out takin' care of your interests."

"That's so," joined in his wife.

"When I can go ahead, like a man," said Dick, "I don't care for danger nor trouble, as you all know, but when I've got to stand still with the detectives pokin' their confounded noses about me all the time, I'm nervous and mad."

"Cuss 'em!"

"To the devil with 'em."

Every man indulged in some savage expression about the detectives.

"Without 'em the world would be happy," said the woman.

"When I was over the river," continued Lacy, "I made the young woman write a letter to her father. He's got it by this time, an' I'm sure it will stir him up. He won't care for the police or anythin' when he reads that letter. He'll be ready to plank the money down to anybody who'll take it and get his daughter for him."

"Vell, who's to get it for us?" asked the ugly man.

"I've a plan, I don't like it, but there is no other," returned Lacy.

"We must risk somethin'," said one.

"Let's get out of the scrape as soon as we can," advised another.

"Them's my sentiments," said Dick's wife.

"My idea is this," said Dick, seemingly much relieved that the gang were willing to let him have his way in the matter. "Jacobs must send a letter to the chap that's workin' with us, to take the money an' keep it. I'll write to the old man to pay it over to him. Then we'll release the woman, and the detectives will quiet down."

"I'm in for that 'ere way," said a man leaning against the wall.

"So am I."

"An' I."

Each man gave his consent.

"All right, boys," said Lacy. "It's a big risk for us, but we've got to stand it. That fellow will have a good chance to play a trick on us, an' leave for parts unknown with the money, but we must trust him."

"He'll never live to get far," said the big man, striking the table with his fist.

"Vell, never let up on him," cried the ugly man.

"You can trust him," said Jacobs.

"I hope you know what you are talkin' about," said the woman, looking at Jacobs, not in the most amiable manner. "I don't put much faith in your 'pinions any time."

Jacobs colored, but said nothing. The fact was that, next to Lacy, he was the most intelligent man in the gang, though he had not been a member of it very long. The affair in hand was of his planning, and he began to see that the gang were disposed to hold him responsible, if it resulted in failure.

"Two nights hence we will meet again," said Lacy. "By that time I will know the results."

The men left the room, one at a time. Some went up-stairs, and others cautiously withdrew from the house. Lacy and Jacobs talked together for some minutes, and then the latter took his departure.

"I'm goin' to bed," said the woman, yawning. "If there was more crackin' of cribs and less meetin', I'd sleep better."

After the men left Lacy hastily wrote to Mr. Worden in these words:

"MR. WORDEN:—

"Pay the money to your friend, Mr. Clark. We've notified him where to send it. Don't ask him any questions, and then you can't tell the police. Make haste. Can't wait any longer. SNAKE."

This letter was posted early in the morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

SHARP SAM, THE DETECTIVE.

SHARP SAM was filled with a great resolution. It was to find the murderer.

He realized that he was a fugitive from justice, by reason of this man's crime, and not by any of his own. He had seen him so distinctly, that now, he could recognize him anywhere.

Great was the surprise among the jockeys when Sam told them of his intention to go away.

"Thar now," cried Bob, "dar's gratitude for yo'. Got yo' good place, an' good clothes, an' now yo' gwine way."

"Dat ar' boy 'fraid to stay," said another of the boys. "Yo' keep 'way from de Grand Stand, an' yo' won't git clubbed."

"I've business in the city," urged Sam.

"What yo' come out har' for den?" returned Bob. "Didn't look much like business when yo' lay in de road out dar."

"Boys," said Sam, as his voice trembled and tears came in his eyes, "it does look bad for me to leave so soon. I don't want to do it, but I must."

"Dar now, don't cry," said Bob, not unmoved himself. "Yo're the fust white boy I've liked in de Norf."

"Dunno what yo' want to leave for. De boss likes yer ridin'," said another.

Mr. Harper himself now came into the stable.

"Glad yo're 'bout ag'in," he remarked, pleasantly to Sam.

"He's gwine way," said Bob.

"Poor critter, he needn't," replied Mr. Harper.

"I don't blame him for goin' to the Grand Stand. He got a little excited with the races, I reckon. Don't wonder at it—git so myself sometimes. He'll larn better 'fore long."

Sam now in a few words thanked Mr. Harper for his kindness, and stated that he intended to leave that day on his return to the city. Mr. Harper seemed surprised, and said:

"I was gwine to teach you a smart chance of things, an' take you to Kentucky. You won't find a better place than with me."

"Boy, I'd stay," urged Bob.

Sam shook his head to say no, for his heart was too full for him to speak.

"Well," said Mr. Harper, "you know your own business. I'll give you five dollars to help you 'long. Never lie or steal. I wish you well."

These kind words, and particularly the presentation of such a sum as five dollars, overwhelmed the tender-hearted boy. Great tears chased one another down his face, but still there was an expression of joy in his countenance.

"I'll always 'member you an' the boys," said Sam. "Thank 'e, sir, for the money. It's more'n I ever had in my life 'fore."

"You can leave the jockey suit," continued Mr. Harper, "but keep t'other one."

He shook hands with the boy, and walked out of the stable.

"I'll gib yo' half a dollar. I won a heap on dat ar' race," said Bob, presenting the money.

This started the other boys. Every one gave Sam something.

"Yo' take 'em, every cent," cried Bob; "dunno when yo'll come up with luck ag'in."

Sam felt the full truth of this remark.

With a sad heart he now bid good-by to the boys, and glanced for the last time at the noble racers in their stalls.

Then he hastened away.

He was uncertain as to his future plans when in the city. He thought that the police would hardly know him in his new suit of clothes. At all events he was determined to run even this risk, in the hope of finding the man he was in search of.

He did not even know his name. But his face was ever present before his vision.

"How jolly it is," he said, as he jogged along, "to feel some money in your pocket. If I could meet Mrs. Miller an' her boys, I'd stand treat for the whole lot of us."

When he reached the Central Park he was very weary.

"I like this 'ere place," said Sam, looking about, admiringly, "most as well as Jerome Park. It's bigger, but they don't 'low no racin'. I'll creep 'mong the bushes, there, an' take a nap."

After some time he was awakened by the sound of voices near him.

"I'm glad I woke up," he muttered, "they might have stolen my money. It's all right—I'll lay low an' hear what they say."

The locality was in the upper part of the Park, where there are groves and thickets favorable to the seclusion of any one who seeks it.

Two men had sought the spot, by different paths, and now were in earnest conversation.

They were Clark, and the man Jacobs.

"You received my letter?" said Jacobs.

"I did, and am here according to your request," replied Clark.

"There is time for only a few words," remarked the first speaker; "Lacy, as I mentioned in the letter, is willing for you to receive the money. Now, my plan is for you to take it, divide it with me, and then both of us will leave the country."

"I will do so," returned Clark. "I cannot carry out any more of these things in New York, and I'm ready to divide, and leave for other scenes and adventures."

"Will Mr. Worden pay the money to you?"

"At any time, if I can promise him that his daughter will be restored to him. Poor old man, he is nearly heart-broken. I never go into that grand Fifth avenue house of his without feeling as if there was a corpse in it."

"Where is it?"

"It's that fine house near—street. By the way, whereabouts in New Jersey is Black Kate's, where Miss Worden is secreted?"

"It is in the country, three miles from Hoboken. She's been locked up in a room over there ever since the night of her abduction. They say she takes it awful hard."

"Poor thing. Under other circumstances I could have loved her."

"Can you meet me in the Park, to-morrow? We can dodge the detectives up here."

"At eleven in the morning."

Then the men separated.

During the conversation Sam had been afraid to move. Once he attempted to obtain a view of them, but the dry bushes near him made such a noise that he did not again attempt it. When they went away he caught sight of the back of one of them, but the other was hidden by trees.

Running out to one of the paths he could not see them in any direction. In fact, ever since he had comprehended the conversation he had been a great deal excited and bewildered.

"Here's a go," he cried, collecting his senses. "I've heard of that 'ducted woman. These are the fellows the police are after. But I didn't dare to call no police. They might have lugged me down to the old Tombs ag'in."

He reflected for a few moments, and then expressed himself in this fashion:

"I didn't rest 'em, but I can git ahead of 'em. I'll go to Mr. Worden, the Fifth avenue gentleman, an' tell him what I've heard. Who knows but what he'll do somethin' for me in return? I'll take the cars down. I don't mind payin' when I'm flush."

Sam was soon on the Seventh avenue cars, which took him down Broadway to a corner not far from Mr. Worden's house.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HURRAH FOR SAM!

SHARP SAM rung the door bell at the big house on Fifth avenue very timidly.

The door opened, and a stiff-looking man servant appeared.

"Does Mr. Worden live here?" asked the boy, in a low tone.

"Yes—what do you want?" was the sharp reply.

"I want to see Mr. Worden, please, sir."

"You can't. Tell me your business."

"I must see him. I've important news."

Sam when put to his mettle was not to be pushed aside by anybody. He now advanced into the vestibule, and the man partly closed the door.

"I believe you to be some sneak thief," said the servant, angrily. "Be off with you, before I call the police."

Sam did not move.

"Did you hear me?" demanded the man.

"I did, but I ain't goin'."

"What's the trouble, John?" asked a voice in the house.

"It's a rough-looking boy, sir. I think he's a thief," replied the servant.

"What does he say?"

"He wants to tell you something. It's only a lie to get in, sir."

In a moment a gentleman came running to the door, saying:

"Let me see him. Perhaps he has news of my daughter."

"So I have," cried Sam.

"Come in, my boy—come in," said the master of the mansion.

The great carved door swung open.

Sam pulled off his cap, and entered.

"Come in the parlor. John, you may go," were the directions of Mr. Worden.

"I'll not go far," muttered John, quite displeased, "for I believe a thief has been let in the house."

"Now, my boy," said Mr. Worden, as soon as they were alone in the parlor, "what is it?"

"Has your daughter been 'ducted?" asked Sam.

"She has."

"I know the fellows who did it."

"Great God!—can it be possible?"

"I was up in the Central Park, you know. You go there sometimes, don't you?"

"Yes—yes, but what about these men?"

"Well, as I was saying, I fell asleep up there in the bushes, an' they woke me up talkin' 'bout gettin' your money."

"Did they say where my daughter was secreted?" asked Mr. Worden, in great agitation.

"Yes, they did."

"Where?"

"At Black Kate's."

"Where does she live?"

"Out in the country."

"What part?"

"In New Jersey—three miles from Hoboken. That's what one of 'em said to the other man."

"Thank God for this information," said Mr. Worden, clasping the boy to him. "Where do you live?"

"Nowhere in particular," said Sam. "I've jest come in town."

"Then stay with me."

"What! in this 'ere fine house?" exclaimed Sam, in wonderment.

"Certainly. If I find my daughter, I will owe much to you. You have found out what has puzzled all the police of New York."

"Are you goin' after her?"

"This very night."

"Can't I go?"

"Yes."

Mr. Worden then summoned John again.

"Give this boy something to eat—treat him well in every respect. He has brought me information of my daughter. Order my carriage to the door. Now I must go with this intelligence to my poor wife."

He left the room.

"Young sir, at your service," said the man, bowing to Sam. "Excuse me for not letting you in sooner. I couldn't see very well in the night. Walk to the dining-room."

Sam was in a dream.

Could all this good fortune be possible?

"Golly!" he said to himself, "this ere beats that fairy story Mrs. Miller once read to me."

When he saw the splendid dining-room, with beautiful silver and glassware on the table, he was again quite dazzled. He hung back.

"Be seated, young sir," said John. "How would you like some quail on toast?"

"Oh, I'm fond of that," cried Sam, regaining his self-possession. "I'm blamed if I know what it is," he added, in an undertone.

In a short time Sam was engaged in eating such a meal as he had never seen, or even imagined, in his life before.

"Have you had plenty?" asked John, as Sam gave up what seemed to be an attempt to eat everything on the table.

"I'm chock-full," replied the boy. "It's a bully feed. You live well here."

The carriage was now ready.

Mr. Worden told Sam to get in, and then said to the coachman:

"Drive to the police station."

Sam heard this, and bounded out of the vehicle.

"Are you goin' to 'rest me?' he demanded, in alarm.

"No, no," said Mr. Worden, in a reassuring tone.

"You have nothing to fear from the police. I want an officer to go to New Jersey with me."

Sam knew, on the contrary, that he had cause to fear the police, but became satisfied with Mr. Worden's explanation, and returned to the carriage.

"No harm shall come to you, my boy," said Mr. Worden.

"I hope not," replied Sam, earnestly.

When he reflected that he was going to a police station, he felt considerably troubled, but he saw no way to avoid it, now, without running away from a man who had promised to befriend him.

At the station-house an officer was obtained, and the carriage then started for Hoboken. Stopping at a police station in that city, they obtained the services of another officer.

The roads were dark, and in a bad condition. Still, by order of Mr. Worden, the horses were urged to their utmost exertions.

"What do you know about this Black Kate's place?" asked Mr. Worden of the Hoboken officer.

"Nothing," he replied. "Our attention has never been called to it. It is on a lonely road, and is not much noticed by anybody."

"I think," said the New York officer, "that we are about to make great discoveries. For some days, I have understood, the detectives on our side have become convinced that the Lacy gang are in some deep job. As Miss Worden is secreted in this out-of-the-way place, it must be a thieves' den."

Let us anticipate the arrival of the carriage at Black Kate's for a brief period.

"You, Kate," called the negro, who lived with her on the place.

"What you want now?" asked Kate, in a surly tone.

"I've got some barrels to get out of dat ar' cellar, an' I an' t'gwine down dar' lone."

"What you 'feard' bout?"

"You knows. It's bad 'nough to go dar in de day-time, let 'lone in de night."

The two went down in a timid manner, both with candles in their hands.

"How it smells," said the man.

"Kind'r like a graveyard," returned Kate.

"I am dat ar'."

"How many dem we put down har—I most for-

get?"

"Three big an' one little one."

"One in every corner, 'cept de one nearest de stairs."

The man put down his candle and began to move some empty barrels. Whenever one of them made much noise he became startled with fear.

"Kate, do de dead rise at night?" asked the man.

"Folks say so," returned Kate, in a low, apprehensive voice.

"Suppose dem we put in dis cellar come out, what would we do?"

Before Kate could answer, the sound of voices was heard outside of the house.

"What's dat?" cried Kate, in alarm.

"Nobody wants any good dis time o' night. 'Haps it ghosts come for t'others."

The man made a step, and in so doing his candle was thrown down and extinguished. In trying to catch it, Kate put out her own, and the result was total darkness in the cellar.

"Lord help us!" screamed the woman.

"De ghosts an' risin'," cried the man.

Both attempted to rush out of the cellar, but stumbled and fell over each other. They struggled together in the dark.

"Ghost, let me up," cried the man.

"Lord! Lord!" shouted Kate, "I'll pray arter dis."

Now there was a loud knocking at the door.

"'Tis dat," moaned the man, "ghosts at de door, an' ghosts in de cellar. Day o' judgment come."

By this time, after falling several times more, the two reached the stairs. Up these they fled, and reached the upper hall just as the front door was burst in by some persons outside.

"Stop dat," cried Kate, recovering herself, as she saw a party of men entering. "How dar' you break dat door?"

"We are officers of the law," said the foremost man.

"Officers of de law," cried Kate, in astonishment.

"Dem's wuss'n ghosts," said the negro man.

"You have a lady imprisoned here," said the same officer.

"How you knows dat?" demanded Kate, now determined to parley a little. "Dis place is whar' we raise vegetables for de market."

"That game is played out," answered the other officer.

"I wish dem ghosts had grabbed me," muttered the negro man.

"Where is the lady?"

"I ain't gwine to tell you," returned Kate, insolently.

"You hold these two worthies," said the Hoboken officer to the other. "And I'll soon search the house. Come on, Mr. Worden."

First they went through some of the lower rooms, but they were not occupied. Then they passed through one up-stairs, and then came to another, which was locked.

In an instant the door was forced, and father and daughter were in each other's embrace.

"Father! father!" she cried.

"Saved at last," he murmured, as he folded her again and again to his heart.

"Bully!" said Sam, as he wiped his streaming eyes.

Before daylight, Miss Worden was in her own bed at home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A VILLAIN UNMASKED.

THE hour for the unmasking of Clark was now at hand. His course of villainy, as shrewd and successful as it had been, was about to close.

The night before he had called at Mr. Worden's, and very much to his surprise, found that he was absent.

"Never mind," he said, as he turned from the door, without further explanations. "I will call early in the morning."

He came and was ushered into the parlor, where he had been so often before.

"Now," he said, "I must play my points nicely. Before I leave, the check for fifty thousand dollars must be in my hands."

Mr. Worden entered, with a beaming face. He looked many years younger, and, for the first time since his daughter's abduction, he was smiling.

"Why, sir," exclaimed Clark, "you look like a new man this morning. What has occurred?"

"My daughter is found."

Had a cannon gone off, then and there, Clark could not have given more of a start.

"Found?" he mechanically repeated.

"Yes, sir, and not only that, but she is now in this house."

Clark turned pale and then red; he staggered, and seemed about to fall.

"Oh, my dear sir," cried Mr. Worden, "I did not think you would feel the joyful surprise so deeply. Compose yourself, and I will tell you how it came about. It was a pure piece of good providence, and nothing else."

"Do tell me," returned Clark. "Really, really, I am quite overcome."

"Why, sir, a poor boy asleep in the Central Park overheard the conversation of two men, who were engaged in the affair."

"Hell and fury!" thought Clark; "that must have been Jacobs and myself."

"With two police officers, I went over to New Jersey, and rescued my daughter. Important arrests will be made to-day."

The very earth seemed to be dissolving under the feet of the now foiled villain. His plans and hopes were scattered in a moment, and still more direful calamity seemed impending.

He choked and he could not speak. He grew dizzy and reeled to the mantle-piece for support.

"Oh, my dear, dear sir," cried Mr. Worden, in a great deal of sympathy, "this is too much good news at one time. You must be unwell this morning."

"Yes, yes," gasped Clark; "I am—unwell."

It was some moments before he could control himself. Then he remarked:

"I congratulate you, Mr. Worden. How is the lady?"

"Oh, she was treated most infamously. Given up to an old negro to be insulted and starved. Think of that, sir, for my tenderly-brought-up daughter. Sir, I am determined to bring every one of these scoundrels to justice."

Clark grew very pale, but made no reply.

"The officers," continued Mr. Worden, "made many important discoveries at the den in New Jersey. The whole thing will now be traced out, and not a man of them shall escape, if law and justice are in the land."

After Sharp Sam had eaten his breakfast at Mr. Worden's, he began to roam about the house, in wonderment of everything he saw. He went through the rooms, examined the furniture and ornaments, and was greedily amused and absorbed.

"It's a high old place," he said. "Why, it beats the museum."

Just at the last remark of Mr. Worden, Sam came along the hall, and, hearing voices, looked into the parlor.

One glance was sufficient.

"Murderer!" he exclaimed, rushing in and grasping Clark by the arm.

"Why, Sam—Sam," cried Mr. Worden, in astonishment; "what do you mean? This gentleman is one of my friends, Mr. Clark."

"He is a murderer," screamed Sam, "and a robber."

Mr. Worden looked thunderstruck. Clark, in a bewildered way, said:

"What a queer boy. Little fellow, take your hands off."

"Never," answered Sam, "till I hand you over to the police."

The door-bell rung.

Two men entered the parlor.

"My God!—detectives," said Clark, in a low tone. One of the men walked up to Clark, and said:

"You are Clark. I have a warrant for your arrest."

"What does this mean?" demanded Mr. Worden.

"It has been discovered," said the officer, "that this man, who has been acting as your friend, was himself a party to the abduction of your daughter."

"Can it be possible?" cried Mr. Worden, pale with mingled astonishment and exasperation. "Why, he was her escort on the night of the abduction."

"He is not what he seems," said the detective. "We expect to know more about him in the course of the day, but we already have sufficient to cause his arrest."

"He is a murderer and robber," spoke up Sam.

"I'm 'dicted for his crimes."

"Who are you?" asked both the officers, in a breath.

"I'm Sharp Sam, who got out of the Tombs."

"Hello!" exclaimed one of the officers, "this is getting to be a big thing."

Before another word was said, the other officer slipped handcuffs on Sam.

He began to cry, and said:

"I didn't do nothin'. That's the fellow—take him."

"So we will," said the officer, and in another moment the irons were on the wrists of Clark.

A sickly pallor overspread his face, and he said:

"You must do your duty, but there must be a mistake."

"No mistake at all," returned one of the officers. "We have your confederate, Jacobs, and he has already told the whole story."

"Then the jig is up," replied Clark.

"You bet," said the officer.

Mr. Worden hardly knew what to say or do. Such revelations and changes had taken place that he hardly realized his own existence.

At last, however, he caught sight of Sam, manacled and in tears.

"My boy," he said, "what do you mean by what you say about this man?"

"I mean," replied Sam, "that I saw him run out of the house where that 'ere woman was murdered. They caught me, but he's the one who did it. Oh, Mr. Worden, save me."

"I will, my boy—I will," said Mr. Worden, patting him on the head.

"This boy," remarked one of the officers, "has always asserted his innocence, and told the same story which he now relates. Perhaps, as we have Clark on this other charge, we will be able to ferret out the whole truth."

"He will have to go back to the Tombs, though," said the other officer.

"Never mind, Sam, if you do," said Mr. Worden, in a comforting way. "I'll immediately see the District Attorney, and no harm shall come to you."

"Thank you," said Sam. "Don't let 'em put me in a cell with Tall Mike—he'd kill me for not goin' to his gang."

"He's gone to the State prison," said one of the detectives.

"Glad of it," returned Sam. "He did a good turn for me, though."

Clark stood the picture of distress and humiliation. His head hung upon his breast, and he breathed painfully.

"If that fellow had not put the irons on so quick," he muttered, "I'd have taken some of the arsenic I have in my pocket, and ended all right here."

"You, sir, have played a pretty part," said Mr. Worden. "Your letters of introduction must be forged."

"Of course they are," said one of the officers, laughing.

"He has played it off nicely," said the other officer.

"A visitor at the clubs, and in the best New York society."

"Going with gamblers and thieves at the same time," joined in the first officer.

"Murderin' and robbin', too," exclaimed Sam.

It was more than Clark could bear. Suddenly he raised his head, and said, bitterly:

"Mock me, if you please. Circumstances are against me, I confess, but every man is innocent until he is proved guilty."

"There'll be proof enough," said one of the officers. "Don't fret about that."

"From the men that's in the case," said the other detective. "I know they'll get enough proof to—"

"Hang him, I hope," broke in Sam.

The officers and Mr. Worden smiled, but Clark dropped his head again.

The two officers and their prisoners soon rode away in a carriage. Mr. Worden, in his own carriage, started to have an interview with the District Attorney about Sam.

"I will go his bail whenever they'll let me," he said.

CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. MILLER'S GOOD FORTUNE.

Mrs. MILLER and her sons were greatly rejoiced at the final escape of Sharp Sam from the police. The papers of the next day informed them that the strictest search for the boy had been fruitless.

"Where do you think he has gone?" asked Charles, of his mother.

"Can't say," she replied. "Perhaps he'll go on board of some ship, and sail away to some foreign country."

"Like my father did," said the boy, heedlessly.

Mrs. Miller placed her hand on her bosom, and said:

"What do you talk that way for? I've told you never to bring up your father's name."

"Why not?" asked the smallest boy, "other boys talk 'bout their fathers."

Mrs. Miller bit her lip, and looked troubled.

"Walter, don't worry mother," said the oldest boy.

"I wish I could hear more 'bout my father," persisted the boy. "Is he dead?"

"Well, I will tell you, Walter," said Mrs. Miller, "you are old enough now to understand the sad—sad story."

"Is it a story?" asked Walter, innocently.

"It's what father did—can't you understand?" said Charles, rebukingly.

"I know—I know," cried Walter, with sudden comprehension.

"Your father," said Mrs. Miller, looking with tearful eyes upon her sons, "followed the sea."

"Was he a sailor?" asked Walter.

"Yes, he was a sailor," returned his mother, "and when you were a little baby he do—do—er—ted me."

Here her sobs prevented further utterance.

"Don't cry, mother," said Charles.

"What a bad man," cried Walter. "I don't like him."

"Did he say where he was goin'?" asked Charles.

"No, that was what made it so hard. He went away in the morning, and never came back."

"How did you find out 'bout him afterward?" inquired Charles, with great interest.

"I went to one of the offices where they ship sailors, and they told me that he had shipped as one of the crew of a ship bound to China."

"I've studied 'bout China," said Charles, "it's on the other side of the world."

"You don't say so," cried Walter. "Couldn't we dig down to 'em?"

"No, Walter," replied Mrs. Miller, with a smile.

"When you study, like Charles has, you'll know all about China."

"I'd like to go there and find my father. It would be a good thing to have a father here. He could work for us."

"Oh, you talk too much, Walter," said the older boy.

"Mother, go on with your story."

"There's not much more of it," replied Mrs. Miller, with a sigh. "Your father never came back to me. In all these long years—years of poverty and trial—I have never heard a word from him."

Mrs. Miller began to cry again.

"He must be dead," said Charles.

"Perhaps he married a China woman," said Walter, very seriously.

"Bother, Walter—you're a goose!" exclaimed Charles.

"He talks very foolish, I think," said Mrs. Miller.

"I'm young," replied Walter, finding that his remark had displeased both his mother and Charles.

"I'll do better when I know more."

"I hope so," said his mother.

"Listen, an' don't talk so much," advised Charles. About this time the door of the room was softly opened, and the head of a man appeared.

"Land an' ocean!" he muttered, "there they are. The mother and the two boys. I know 'em, though I haven't seen 'em for so long a time."

He stepped softly into the room.

"I'll listen," he said, "it will do me good to hear 'em talk."

"How many years ago is it, mother?" asked Charles.

"It is seven, next July—seven long years of watching and waiting."

"Do you think he will ever come?" asked Walter.

"I'll never give him up while I live," exclaimed Mrs. Miller.

"Susan," said a voice.

"Great Heaven!" cried Mrs. Miller, turning round, "whose voice is that, so like my husband's?"

"It's a man in our room," shouted Charles, in alarm.

"Police! police!" called Walter, as he ran under the table.

"You are—" cried Mrs. Miller, looking intently into the face of the man.

"Your long-lost husband, Susan."

Charles.

The wife and husband were instantly locked in an embrace which only relaxed when the boys rushed forward for a share from their new-found father.

"Where did you come from, husband?" asked Mrs. Miller, with her first breath, "why, we were talking about you."

"I heard you," he replied, laughing; "you were so interested that you didn't hear me come in. Well, I'll tell you where I came from. I reached the wharf in New York yesterday in my own ship from Liverpool."

"Have you got a ship—a big ship?" asked Walter, dancing in front of his father.

"Yes, my son—you shall go on board, too. Well, Susan, as soon as we made fast I took a few things in a valise, and started for Brooklyn, to find you at the old place. A boy helped me along with the valise to the Catharine Ferry. When I got over there nobody knew anything about you. It was too

late to find you that night, so I went to a hotel. All day to-day I have been chasing about, following one clew and another, until, at last, I found your place of abode. You and the boys seem well."

"Yes, thank God! we're in good health. But, Charles, why did you leave me, and where have you been all this time?"

"It is a long story," returned Captain Miller, "but I will tell you enough to-night to satisfy your natural curiosity on the subject."

It was a pleasant-looking family group. Mr. Miller and his wife were seated side by side, Walter was on his father's knee, and Charles was leaning affectionately on his shoulder.

"To begin," said Captain Miller, "when I went away that day, I didn't remember anything until the ship was off Staten Island, going to sea. They had shipped me, when intoxicated, for a voyage to China."

"That's on the other side of the world," broke in Walter.

"So it is, my son. Well, I was very sorry when I came to myself, and found that I must leave my family in such a manner. We always loved one another, didn't we, Susan?" said the captain, taking his wife's hand.

"To be sure we did, Charles, and that made your going so strange," replied Mrs. Miller, warmly.

"Before the ship got to China, we were captured by pirates."

"Pirates!" cried Walter; "what's 'em?"

"Bad men," replied the captain, "who sail over the seas, and capture vessels and property belonging to other people—they are sea-robbers."

"Do they have guns?" asked Walter, in wonderment.

"Yes, guns, knives, swords, and all kinds of things to kill with."

"Wasn't you afraid, father?" further inquired the boy.

"We fought for our ship," returned Captain Miller, "and many on both sides were killed. But they overpowered us, plundered the ship, then set her on fire, and took the rest of us in their own vessel as prisoners."

"What wicked men," said Charles.

"Yes," answered his father; "the Chinese pirates are bold and cruel men. To go on with my narrative, they kept us prisoners on an island for a long time, but some of us finally stole a boat and got away. We reached Hong Kong in a state of starvation. There I found employment on a steamboat running on one of the rivers."

"Why didn't you write to mother?" inquired Charles.

"Yes," said Mrs. Miller, laughing, "that's what I want to know."

"Well," said the captain, coloring a little, "I ought to have done so, but I had been gone so long that I thought I would wait awhile longer. I was on the go all the time on the steamboat, and time slipped away rapidly."

"It hung heavy enough on my hands," remarked Mrs. Miller, with a sigh.

"Well, well, it's all right, now," said her husband, kissing her.

"He's got a ship at the dock, now," said Walter.

"So I have," replied the father, laughing, "and I'll tell you how that came about. I got to be the pilot, and then the captain of the steamboat. I got good wages, and I made money on the merchandise that I bought. Next, I sailed for England as the captain and part owner of a ship and cargo. At Liverpool I loaded for New York, and here I am."

"Why, Charles, my dear," said Mrs. Miller, in some excitement, "you must be a rich man."

"I am worth," replied the captain, proudly, "half the value of the finest clipper that ever entered the port of New York."

"Thank God! thank God!" cried Mrs. Miller, "the days of our poverty are over."

"I'll never sell another paper," cried Charles. "I don't like it."

"My father owns a ship, hurrah!" cried Walter.

Tears and joy were in the eyes of all.

"I wish Sharp Sam was here to see father," said Charles.

"Who's Sharp Sam?" asked the captain, in surprise.

Then they told the story of Sam.

"Now, I wonder," said Captain Miller, reflecting, "if that boy who helped me with my valise last night was not Sharp Sam. The description fits him exactly."

"Wouldn't it be strange if he had met father first," said Charles. "He'll turn up some day, I guess."

The following day Captain Miller provided the entire family with new clothing, and they removed to a hotel. The story of the husband's return ran like wildfire through the tenement-house, and the congratulations were universal and sincere. Mrs. Miller, as a last act before she went, divided her furniture, and some other effects, among the tenants, causing blessings to be showered upon her.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AT THE TOMBS AGAIN.

SHARP SAM was again in the Tombs.

He was now more of a hero than a prisoner. A great deal of sympathy had been felt for him before, by reason of the uncertainty regarding his guilt of the crime with which he was charged, and also by reason of his courage, adventures, and many interesting traits of character.

The daily papers had given long accounts of everything concerning him, and pictures of his exploits had also appeared.

The clouds which hung over him were fast disappearing, and, as they did so, his popularity was increasing on every side. Hence he was not rigorously

treated in the prison. He had a whole cell to himself, and, by order of Mr. Worden, food was supplied to him from a Broadway restaurant.

The most noted members of the Lacy gang had been arrested, and were also prisoners in the Tombs. Black Kate and the negro man were held in New Jersey. Investigations were going on in this city and in New Jersey, in regard to the guilt of the gang, and the most astonishing revelations were being made from day to day.

Clark was also in the Tombs. He occupied one of the strongest cells, and was regarded by the keepers as a most accomplished as well as desperate villain. In the face of all the facts already known, he still maintained his innocence.

In truth, he was still plotting.

"The case is desperate," said Clark, as he walked his cell in great excitement. "Never before did I find myself environed with so many difficulties. I do not see a single ray of light. I tell them that I am innocent, but I know that the evidence against me will be ample—and not for one crime, but for many. Suddenly my luck seems to have deserted me—all at once there is a perfect avalanche of misfortunes upon me."

He pressed his hands to his throbbing brow.

"Everything is done to humiliate me. The men whom I have been associated with I despise, but I appear to the public as one of the same class. What will be said when it comes out who I really am?—what when it becomes known that I belong to such an old and honored family? Oh, my proud grandfather! I wonder that you do not rise from your grave."

Overcome with his emotions, he wept like a child.

"This is the city of my birth," he continued, at length. "Here passed my childhood, and here I went to school. Shall it also come to pass that from here I shall go to the State Prison, or?—here he shuddered—"perhaps go to the gallows?"

His bosom rose and fell with emotion, and he beat his brow with his clenched hand.

"There is one way," he exclaimed, "to escape all these troubles—it is by suicide. But how can I effect it now? When I came in they searched me, and discovered the arsenic I had secreted for the hour of trouble. Now, too, they watch me most vigilantly. I know only one way; it is to fascinate and use the lady who comes here with tracts. I will try it to the best of my ability."

No man ever possessed more blandishments with a woman than this villain.

He now refused to talk with any one except the fair young tract-distributor who visited the prison.

"Hang me," said one of the keepers, "if he ain't turned white-livered already. He knows what's comin', an' he's goin' to get ready in time."

"Sister Agnes," as the lady was called by the prisoners, was astonished at the respect and attentions which she received from Clark. She was also astonished that a man who appeared so much of a gentleman could be charged with such crimes.

She was young, and though she had undertaken the distribution of tracts in one of the worst prisons in the world, she had little knowledge of the actual depth of human depravity.

To come in contact with such a gentlemanly man as Clark appeared in all his conversation with her, and, moreover, to find one so contrite about his sins, was something not less agreeable than rare in her prison experience.

Clark took all the tracts she brought, and he talked most glibly with her about doctrinal points.

"Sir," she said one day, "you interest me more and more every time I see you. I have been telling my Sunday school class about you."

"Indeed," said Clark, "you held me up as a terrible warning, I suppose."

"Well, sir," said the woman, apologetically, "I told them that you were charged with great crimes, that you were contrite, and hoped to be forgiven. I urged them to profit by such an example of turning to the way of salvation."

They talked often together, until the woman began to look upon Clark as a brand which she had herself plucked from destruction. She began to defend him to the keepers and beyond the prison walls.

One day Clark said to her:

"You are my only friend on earth. Will you do me a service?"

"Yes; what is it?" she answered, at once.

"Bring me some arsenic."

"What do you want it for?"

"To kill the horrible rats which run all over me at night."

"It is against the rules."

"The rules are cruel. How can I read your tracts and books when the rats torment me so?"

"I will bring you some."

"Thank you. Oh, you will be blessed in your good and self-sacrificing work among prisoners."

When she went away Clark said:

"Now, then, bounds of the law, do your worst. I shall be prepared for triumph or defeat."

On another corridor was the cell of Sharp Sam. Everybody who came to the prison wanted to see him.

"Barnum would make money exhibiting you. Sam," said one of the keepers, "your fame has gone far and wide."

"I wish I was out of 'ere," replied Sam, "I don't like to have people look at me in a prison."

"Why not? They're civil to you."

"Oh, yes, but that ain't it. They point at me an' say all sorts of things 'bout that murder and robbery."

"Most of them seem to think you innocent," responded the keeper. "An' so do we."

"Why don't they let me out? Mr. Worden would go my bail."

"Well, you see they can't take ball for murder, which is the charge in your case."

"But you've got the right one now—Clark."

"Yes, we think so. The way 'll be this. As soon as the district attorney is satisfied with the proof against Clark he'll go into court and move to enter a *nolle prosequi* in your case, and you'll be let out."

"Well, I wish he would hurry up with his *nolle*."

"You'll be the principal witness against Clark, when his trial comes on."

Sam's face became serious.

"I hate to have him hung, but I s'pose I must."

"Or hang yourself," warningly said the keeper.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHARP SAM'S SAILOR CHAMPION.

DANGER and adventure seemed to follow Sharp Sam wherever he went.

After much delay and difficulty Mr. Worden had succeeded in obtaining the release of Sam from the Tombs. The indictment against him was legally disposed of, but Mr. Worden was obliged to become bail for his appearance at both the trial of Clark and of the gang.

"From him," said the official, "will come the most important links of evidence in both cases. Justice will fail without his assistance."

Mr. Worden took Sam home with him, and gave him some pocket-money.

"Do as you please," he said, "but look out that you are not kidnapped. You know a great deal against some people, and their friends might try to put you out of the way."

It was a fact that the most determined efforts were being made to save Lacy, and the different members of his gang under arrest. They had been scattered, broken up, and most of them apprehended, but there were others still at liberty who were exerting every nerve to save those in prison.

When Lacy heard of the release of Sam, he said: "They expect to use that youngster as a witness, do they? Well, we'll see."

His countenance looked dark, and he shook his head significantly.

During the afternoon Sam got tired of staying indoors, and concluded that he would walk out a short distance.

"It's daylight," he said, "an' the streets are full of people. Nobody could hurt me at such a time."

He did not intend to go far, but he became interested in the passing carriages and crowds of people, and wandered on without thinking.

After awhile somebody caught him by the arm, and said:

"Why, Sharp Sam!"

"Charlie Miller!"

"It's me."

"Why, you're all dressed up," said Sam, observing that Charles's appearance was entirely changed.

"So I am," said the boy, proudly. "We're somebody now, and live at a hotel."

"Does your mother live at a hotel now?" asked Sam, in wonderment. "Is she doin' the washin' there?"

Charles curled his lip, scornfully.

"She'll never wash for anybody any more," he cried. "Father has come home a captain, and owner of a ship."

"Gas," said Sam. "Come, I'm no fool."

Charles now told the whole strange and romantic story of his father's going away, long absence, and final return.

"If you don't believe what I say, come round to the hotel, on Fourth avenue, and see for yourself. Mother and father want to see you, anyhow."

"I'll go," cried Sam.

He went to the hotel, and was soon ushered into a fine suit of rooms.

His welcome from Mrs. Miller and Walter was most affectionate. As soon as Captain Miller saw him, he said:

"I thought as much. You are the very boy who carried my valise."

"The very fellow," said Sam, laughing. "You paid me well, too."

Then he told all about his own troubles and adventures.

"But," said he, "I've found a great friend in Mr. Worden. He's going to send me to school, and then set me up in business. I live at his house, on Fifth avenue, now. It's a splendid place, full of lookin'-glasses, pictures, an' all kinds of nice things."

"It ain't as nice as our ship," said Walter.

Then they all laughed at Walter's remark, and Sam promised, at his first opportunity, to go on board.

"I'm only waitin' to testify at these trials," he said, "an' then I'm goin' to school. After that I'll go to work an' make a fortune. Mr. Worden says there's many a rich man in New York who was a poor boy in the beginnin'."

"Those are the self-made men," said Captain Miller. "Our country is full of them. Make them your examples, and you will do well."

"I must be off. I don't like to stay late. There's some bad men want me out of the way. Good-by, all."

Sam shook hands all round, and then left the room.

"Captain," said Mrs. Miller, looking out of the window, "it is growing late. Suppose you follow Sam a little way, and see that no one molests him."

"I will, certainly," replied Captain Miller, taking his hat and going out.

The vigilance and patience of the villains of a city in working out their plans are among their most notable characteristics. The men of the Lacy gang were already on the track of Sam. A watch had been kept upon Mr. Worden's house ever since he entered it, and he had been followed during the

whole afternoon. When he entered the hotel, two men posted themselves where they could watch all the doors.

"Bill, I wonder what the kid wants in there?" said one of the men.

"He seems to know the other boy pretty well. Pete, I've a notion that we'll have trouble 'fore we get hold of him," replied Bill.

The men were very rough-looking fellows. They did not belong in New York, but had been sent for in Philadelphia.

"We've mastered a good many of 'em," said Bill. "An' made a noise in the world, without being caught," returned Pete.

"That Charley Ross was handled as easy as any boy I ever had anythin' to do with."

"Why, yes; a little candy tempted him."

"This 'ere cove ain't no candy-sucker."

"Not a bit of it. I see from his very looks that he's smart an' plucky."

These were the two men who had stolen Charley Ross in Germantown. They were celebrated among the thieves for their success in kidnapping children. It was thought by Lacy's friends in New York that, with the assistance of these men, Sharp Sam could be easily put out of the way.

"What plan are you goin' to take, Bill?" asked Pete.

"I'm puzzled to know what to do. I thought if we got a chance to talk to him, we might tell him we were officers, and hurry him off before he could make any trouble."

"Our chance is improvin' the longer he stays in there. It's growin' dark, now."

"When he comes out," said Bill, who was the leader in the business, "we'll follow at his heels, an' the first chance we git, clip him over the head an' make off."

"That's risky," said Pete; "there's so many people in the streets."

"True," replied Bill; "but don't you notice what a hurry they are all in? These 'ere New Yorkers—men and women—always go on a half-run, as if the devil was after 'em."

"They don't notice much, that's a fact."

"Well, then, I think we could knock this 'ere kid over, an' they'd not stop to look at him before we could run out of sight."

"There he is," said Pete, as Sam emerged from the hotel. "He's in a hurry, now."

"I'm sorry I staid so late," said Sam, as he walked briskly up the street.

"Now, follow," said the ruffian, Bill, "an' knock him the first chance."

"All right," returned Pete.

Sam went up two blocks from the hotel, and then he turned through a cross street toward Fifth avenue. The street he had selected was one with houses on only one side, while the other was the long side wall of Gilmore's Garden. By some chance, too, he went to the walk which skirts this wall.

"By all that's lucky," said Pete, "he's taken the very street that suits our plan."

They ran over to the same side.

Sam was not a timid boy, but he hastened his steps, and felt apprehensive, because he knew there was danger to him in the streets at that hour. However, he saw, only a block off, the hundreds of lights in Madison Square, and he felt half-ashamed of his fears.

The ruffians drew nearer.

Sam heard the footsteps and looked back.

"I don't like those fellows comin' on me in that way," he said.

At the same time Bill and Pete became aware that there was a man close behind them.

"It's now or never," said Bill.

"Suppose we let this chap behind pass us," suggested Pete.

"He won't do it," replied Bill, excitedly. "Every time we hold up, he does the same. I don't know what he means. I wish we could give him a touch of the knuckles for followin'."

"This is the best spot," said Pete; "in a minute the kid will be in the light of Madison Square."

They advanced rapidly upon Sam, and both were on the eve of striking him, when each received a tremendous blow alongside of their heads.

"Run, Sam, for your life," cried the voice of Captain Miller; "these men want to kill you."

Sam fled like a deer.

The men, though for the moment stunned, sprung up and dashed off in another direction.

Captain Miller was left victorious and alone. The whole affair had been so quick that the few passers did not know what it meant.

As he turned to go back to the hotel, Captain Miller could but exclaim:

"It was lucky I followed that boy. They would have killed him, without doubt. Well, I shall have more news for Mrs. M. and the boys."

Sam did not stop running until he got to Mr. Worden's door. When he related what had befallen him, Mr. Worden said:

"It is fortunate for you that your friend Captain Miller came up. You must stay indoors for the present."

"I won't stir a paw unless some one goes with me—it ain't safe," replied Sam.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MARRIAGE BELLS.

The clouds which hung over some of our characters had passed away, and the sunshine of joy was streaming upon them.

The marriage-bells were about to ring for Miss Worden, and within her home all was gladness again.

Her recovery from the effects of her treatment by Black Kate was rapid. The reaction of her feel-

ings, from the deepest distress to that of perfect tranquillity, soon brought the natural bloom to her cheeks.

As the full developments of the plot in which Clark had been engaged were revealed, she, like all others, was astounded at its enormity.

It had one good effect, however. Formerly a confirmed flirt, and ready to make intimacies of hastily made male acquaintances in society, she now saw the great danger of it.

"As soon as you are convalescent," said her mother to her one morning, "I hope that you will allow Mr. Vincent to see you. He has called every day to inquire about you."

The beauty bit her lip and colored. The mention of the gentleman brought up a flood of recollections, which were self-rebuking to her.

"Do you think I ought to see him?" asked the daughter.

"Certainly, my dear," said the mother. "Why not?"

"I have treated him very badly. How can he forget or forgive it?"

"He is a noble fellow, and he understands your true worth too much to treasure up any unkindness."

"That person—I dread to name him"—said Miss Worden—"that Clark fascinated me. His magnificent appearance first attracted me, and then he saved me from a terrible fall."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Worden, "having a claim upon our gratitude, he bewitched us all."

"And so Mr. Vincent has called every day," said Miss Worden, looking archly at her mother.

"Every day, and sometimes twice, the servants have told me."

"You were sick—perhaps it was an attention to you, from an old friend of the family."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the mother; "it was nothing of the kind. His bouquets and hot-house fruit, if you will remember, were left with his compliments for you."

Miss Worden pulled a rose to pieces, which she held in her hand, and seemed quite abstracted with her own thoughts.

She never looked more beautiful. Her sickness had given her a delicate paleness, which only increased her attractiveness.

"Perhaps," she said, "I might like Mr. Vincent again. I believe he is a most honorable and virtuous man."

"He is a true nobleman of nature," cried Mrs. Worden, warmly, "and rich besides."

"Well, I will see him when next he calls," said Miss Worden.

"I'm most happy to hear you say that," returned the mother. "Both your father and myself esteem Mr. Vincent beyond any acquaintance you have."

"We were good friends in the past."

"Yes, until that viper crossed our threshold. I hope you will be not only friends, but something more."

"Oh, mother—mother," exclaimed Miss Worden, throwing some of the rose leaves toward her, "you are 'match-making' again!"

Not long after this the announcement of the engagement of Miss Bessie Worden and Mr. Jasper Vincent was duly promulgated in the world of fashion. More than this, their marriage was announced to take place within a few weeks, prior to their departure for Europe.

All was now excitement at the Worden mansion. There was to be a grand wedding. The ceremony was to be performed in Trinity Chapel, and then a reception was to take place at the house.

Sharp Sam was as busy as a bee. Dressed in clothes made for him by Mr. Worden's tailor, with his hair cut, and his face clean, no one would have known him for the poor boy of the streets. It is hardly necessary to say that he was now perfectly happy.

The whole Worden family regarded him with great favor. His natural intelligence, his good nature, and his fidelity, to say nothing of the special services he had rendered to them, made him a favorite.

After consultation, it had been determined to make him a substantial reward. The time agreed upon for it was the morning of the day before the wedding.

Mr. and Mrs. Worden, their daughter, and Mr. Vincent, all assembled in the library.

"Sam, you're wanted in the library," said John, the servant. "There's a family meetin' in there."

"Can't git 'long without me, I suppose?" replied Sam, with his usual humor.

"I think, from what I've heard, that the meetin' is 'bout you."

"I hope I ain't done nothin' to 'fend 'em," said Sam, in some apprehension.

"It is an 'em' see. I don't think you have," said John, encouragingly.

With fear and trembling, Sam entered the room.

"Here I am," said Sam. "Please, Mr. Worden, I ain't done nothin' wrong. Don't send me away."

"You misunderstand," said Mr. Worden, in a most kindly tone.

"We do not wish to send you away," added Mrs. Worden, "but have some good news for you."

"Good news!" exclaimed Sam; "has that 'ere Clark 'fessed?"

They all could but laugh at his earnest manner, and the nature of the question, showing what was uppermost in his mind.

"No, Sam," said Mr. Worden, "it is something different from that, but quite as beneficial to you."

"Tell me, right off!" cried Sam.

"Sam," said Mr. Worden, with much feeling, "you know thit to-morrow my daughter is to be married."

"This will be a very happy event to all of us."

"It will be to me, too," broke in Sam, looking toward Miss Worden and her affianced, and smiling.

"If you had not acted on the information you obtained," continued Mr. Worden, "it is probable that she would have been murdered. You saved her life." "I'd do it again, too," cried Sam.

"Thank you, my noble boy," said Miss Worden, wiping the tears from her eyes. "Your future interests," Mr. Worden went on to say, "must be considered. In our happiness we cannot forget how much we owe to you."

"Don't talk any more 'bout it," said Sam. "You've done everything for me."

Here he burst into tears. "There was not a dry eye in the room."

"Let me go now," said Sam, "I'm feelin' more than I can—can—spe-a-k."

His tears ran afresh, and his emotion was very great.

"You don't know," he said, when he managed to control himself, "what I've suffered in my life. Poor—no father or mother—no chance in the world—all dark—dark before me."

"From this time out it will be all bright," said Mr. Worden.

"I know it, and that makes me so—so happy," replied Sam, still wiping away the tears.

"Look at this," said Mr. Worden, holding up a small thin book.

"What book is that?" asked Sam.

"It is the book of a saving's bank," returned Mr. Worden, "and on this page it says that ten thousand dollars have been deposited in the—Bank, which belong to you."

"Ten thousand dollars—belong to me," repeated Sam, in a bewildered manner.

"The money," continued Mr. Worden, "is a sum to which each of those present has contributed. When you are twenty-one you can draw principal and interest—it will then be a large sum. Until you are of age I will supply all your wants."

"Bless you, sir!—bless all of you!" sobbed Sam, falling on his knees before Mr. Worden. "Oh, God of Heaven, bless these kind, generous people!"

We draw the curtain of privacy on this affecting scene. All were in tears, and yet all were happy.

The chimes of Trinity Chapel rung out the wedding peals. Soft, silvery and merrily the music broke upon the evening air.

The chancel of the church was decorated with natural flowers, and as the fashionable throngs in full dress entered, appropriate music was brilliantly performed on the organ.

There was a great crush of people. The church was filled with invited guests, and the streets in the vicinity were crowded with the populace.

The abduction of Miss Worden had made her name familiar to the public, and her wedding was thus the cause of not only a fashionable but general excitement.

To a splendid wedding-march the bridal-party entered. It was a sight to behold them. Fashion and wealth had done their utmost to make the affair grand and dazzling in the extreme. There were ten bridesmaids, who were all lovely young ladies, and magnificently adorned. The bride outshone them all, however, in beauty, and in the costliness of her costume. Her jewels were diamonds and pearls. The bridegroom and the groomsmen were handsome men.

Take it all in all even gay New York had seldom seen such a wedding display. After the ceremony a thronged reception took place. A steamer of the next day bore the happy couple to Europe, for an extensive bridal tour.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A CRIMINAL'S EXIT.

RETRIBUTION for crime, though often delayed, is sure to come. No offense against nature and against law ever went, or ever will go, unpunished. If man should fail to exact that which is due to human law, there is no escape from divine justice.

The punishment of the criminals whose career has formed a part of our story promised to be severe and general.

Lacy, and the other members of the gang who had been apprehended, had been indicted, and demanded separate trials. They employed the best criminal lawyers of the New York bar, and a most determined effort was made to save them from conviction, and, next, to obtain an arrest of judgment.

But nothing could save them. Their crimes had been too numerous, and the people of the city were too much aroused for any hesitation on the part of the juries or judges.

One after another they were consigned, for long terms, to the State Prison. Lacy, his wife, the ugly man, and all the rest, were thus disposed of. Jacobs's evidence was used against the others, and he was liberated, on the condition that he should leave the country.

In New Jersey, Black Kate and the negro man were convicted, and sent to the State Prison at Trenton.

The trial of Beekman, *alias* Clark, for thus he was named in the indictment for murder, was reserved for the last. It was the most important, and public excitement on the subject increased as the time for it drew near.

At stated periods what is called the Court of Oyer and Terminer is held in the county of New York, for the trial of capital cases, by a judge of the Supreme Court. Trials of the same nature take place in the Court of General Sessions, but a prisoner can move to have his case taken to the Oyer and Terminer. This is generally done, as the calendar of the other court is crowded with cases of inferior crimes which do not involve long trials.

The case of *The People vs. Henry Beekman, alias Clark*, was the first on the calendar of the Oyer and Terminer. The prisoner had retained eminent coun-

sel, and on the part of the people, the District Attorney and the Attorney-General of the State were to appear.

Beekman, for by his rightful name we must again call him, was cool in villainy, but humiliation overwhelmed him.

"I could stand up to any deed," he cried, in his lonely cell, the day before the trial was to begin, "and never flinch, but to go into the court-room tomorrow, and stand the gaze of the mob of New York, it unman me."

He walked up and down in great distress.

"I am a sort of show for these prison fellows," he said, bitterly. "They parade me with the greatest publicity whenever they can, and every trial day will be a gala day for them, and the mob who pant for my blood."

He gazed wildly about the cell.

"Nearly every day they have come here, and searched it," he continued. "They have not left me a thing by which I could do myself the slightest injury. That tract distributor, too, failed me when it came to the test—her conscience would not let her break the prison rules, and bring me arsenic, though I told her I wanted it to kill rats."

He stood silent for a few moments, and then burst forth again.

"All earth and hell," he cried, "is leagued against me. Tiger—monster though I am, I can now do nothing to scatter and destroy my enemies—nothing, absolutely nothing, to avert the doom which is fast coming upon me."

He bent his head into his hands, and he strained them against his brow with all his power.

"Would that I had never been born," he cried; "would that death had swept me into the grave in my boyhood's innocence! Oh, father—oh, mother, behold your son! Behold him stained with crimes! behold him taken a murderer through the streets of the city of his birth, and of his respectable ancestors! Remorse—conscience—Almighty God have mercy on me!"

He fell like one shot upon his bed.

When he recovered, and raised his head, his face was ghastly and his eyes were sunken.

"The paroxysm of agony is over," he said. "But I must not give way to these feelings. However much my heart may sink within me—the mob shall know it not."

He dressed himself with great care early on the following morning. Shaving, perfuming, nothing was neglected to make him look like a fashionable gentleman.

Still, when he went from the prison, there was a handcuff under his coat-sleeve, which fastened him to the officer who walked and rode at his side.

In front of the Tombs, in Center street, and in front of the Court House crowds had collected. They rushed wildly about to obtain a glimpse of the celebrated prisoner.

"You draw a crowd like a circus," said one of the officers.

"Curse them!" exclaimed Beekman, angrily; "let the coach ride over them!"

The officers smiled, but did not say anything. It required a considerable number of them to open the way to the court-room.

"Oh my, what a dandy!" cried an urchin, as Beekman emerged from the carriage.

"Didn't he get the old woman's money, sure?" remarked another.

"An' tried to hang a poor boy!" joined in a third.

"Villain!"

"Murderer!"

"Thief!"

These were the terrible words that Beekman heard as he went up the steps and through the Court House.

"It is the worst crowd I ever saw," said one of the officers.

"You've got the worst wretch New York ever saw!" shouted a man.

"Hang him!"

"Hang him!"

Thus spoke voices among the surging people.

Pale and exhausted, Beekman at last reached a small room, connected with the court-room, where the trial was to take place. Here the handcuff was taken off, and he was allowed to recover himself.

At length the clerk of the court rose, and said:

"Place Henry Beekman at the bar."

Then the officers brought him into the court-room, and he was allowed to take a seat by the side of his counsel at a table. He walked in erect, and, seemingly, unembarrassed.

"He holds up his head like a man," said a lawyer.

"He's good-looking," remarked a woman.

"It's too soon for him to weaken," whispered one of the court attendants to a fellow-officer.

The room was large, but crowded with people. Within the railing were a great many lawyers and prominent persons, and every seat allotted to the public was filled, while hundreds more stood waiting at the doors for the first opportunity to enter. In one of the corners, seated with Mr. Worden, was Sharp Sam.

"There he comes," said Sam, excitedly, as Beekman entered. "How nice he looks."

"He don't look much like a murderer," said Mr. Worden.

"I'm sorry for him," said Sam, "but I'm going to tell the whole truth."

"It is your duty," replied Mr. Worden.

The trial consumed many days. There was difficulty in getting a jury, and then, the testimony was fought at every step by the counsel on one side or the other.

Every day the same scenes of the first were enacted, and Beekman suffered a daily martyrdom.

The history of Beekman was clearly traced.

At length Sam was placed on the stand. He gave frank, direct testimony, and positively identified Beekman as the man whom he had seen running down the stairs. On his direct examination, he made a most favorable impression upon court and jury.

"Now break him down—confuse him—annihilate him," whispered Beekman to his lawyers, when they were about to open the cross-examination.

"I think we can—he is only a boy," was the encouraging reply.

But, after many efforts, they utterly failed to do it. Sam rose in intelligence and courage for the occasion, and, after the most searching and perplexing cross-questioning, he left the stand with all his statements repeated and maintained.

Mr. Worden met him, took him by the hand, and said:

"You have done splendidly, my boy."

"They couldn't make me tell a lie," answered Sam, "by trying to put words in my mouth."

"Bully boy!" said an officer, patting him on the head; "you'll make a lawyer yourself some day."

At last the prosecution introduced a piece of evidence which was a surprise to everybody. The executor of Mrs. Beekman, the woman murdered, was placed on the stand, and he testified that, in overhauling her effects, he had found a carbuncle seal ring. This was produced, and exhibited to the court and jury. Next, a jeweler was sworn, who proved, from his books, that he sold a carbuncle ring on the day before the murder. He further swore that the ring produced in court was the one, and that he sold it to the prisoner at the bar.

In Beekman's quaking heart the last hope now died out.

The defense was a total failure. Then came the summing up on both sides, the charge of the judge, and then a short deliberation on the part of the jury.

The jury came in, and the great crowd awaited breathlessly for the verdict.

Beekman was told to stand up. He tried to do so without support, but was obliged to catch the back of his chair.

"Prisoner," said the clerk, solemnly, "look upon the jurors; jurors, look upon the prisoner; how say you, do you find Richard Beekman *alias* Clark, guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty of murder in the first degree," said the foreman.

The prisoner reeled, but did not fall. The audience breathed again.

Then came other formalities. Next the district attorney moved for the immediate sentence of the prisoner, on the ground of the enormity of the offense. His lawyers resisted this strenuously, but without avail.

The judge directed the prisoner to be placed at the bar for sentence. He was asked if he had anything to say. He signified that he had.

Every eye was upon him, and he knew it. Handsome in feature and commanding in form, he stood, now a convicted murderer, before the bar of justice. Still he did not bow his head, but he elevated it, and thus spoke:

"I am convicted, and must answer in the full penalty. All that I have to ask is that the court will now pass sentence, without further harrowing my feelings by allusions to my past life."

He bowed and stopped.

The judge, deeply moved, proceeded to pass the death-sentence. He told the prisoner that he could not altogether conform to his request, and he touchingly alluded to the ancient family to which Beekman belonged, many of its members having been friends of his own.

Then came the sentence, "To be taken to the place from which you came, and on Friday, the day of —, that you be hanged by the neck, and may God have mercy on your soul."

The sheriff's officer led Beekman away. He did not fall, and he did not see, as far as he was conscious of it, but bewildered—benumbed—he followed mechanically.

He faced the crowds, but he heard not their taunting shouts and ribald remarks. He only knew that he walked erect, and bore himself before them like a man.

In the solitude of his cell he melted for the second time since he came to the prison. The very fountains of remorse and sorrow seemed broken up, and he sobbed until he fell asleep.

For him pleasure was no more. For him the beauty of earth was no more.

Guilt was upon him.

He knew now, as all should know, that "The way of the transgressor is hard."

As soon as a prisoner is sentenced to death in New York, he is placed in a strong cell in "Murderer's Row," in the Tombs. He is allowed every comfort consistent with the discipline of the prison, but guarded most rigidly.

Great efforts were made to delay the execution of Beekman, but they did not succeed in a single instance.

There was no hope.

Preparations for the execution had been commenced.

The prisoner at last gave himself up to the duties and conversation becoming one about to enter eternity.

He was in the prime of life and health. It was hard for him to think that he must die so soon, and so ignominiously. The minister urged him to make a confession of his misdeeds, but he positively refused.

"No," he said, when reflecting upon this matter. "I will go to the gallows with a sealed mouth. The

whole town is agog for a confession, and the daily papers are in alarm, fearful that one may get it from me before the others, but I'll disappoint them all. The law and courts have dealt harshly with me, and, though they may do their worst, they shall not squeeze one word of confession, or one word asking for mercy from me. I've lived a bold, bad man, and I will die a proud, brave one."

The day previous to the execution had come. Carpenters were already constructing the gallows. It was the same which Sharp Sam had fallen over in the prison-yard, on the night of his escape.

The day before an execution is always a solemn one in the Towns. The noise of the hammering on the gallows sounds unpleasantly; there is an evidence of depression in the faces of the prisoners, and officials go about their duties seriously and quietly.

The night passes slowly. The prisoner is constantly watched by a detail of deputy sheriffs, as he has been for weeks, day and night. A crowd of reporters for the daily papers gossip with the officers about former executions, and make notes of every occurrence.

Early in the morning the prisoner is taken to the chapel for religious exercises. Then he eats a breakfast of whatever he chooses to order. Then come prayer and conversation with the ministers.

Next, the high sheriff of the county, with his deputies, marches up to the cell. Then the short rope is put about the prisoner's neck, and the black cap on his head.

When all is ready, the solemn procession goes, with a measured tramp, down the corridor, through the main door, and then along the yard to the place where the gallows has been erected.

In this yard is always a crowd of people in waiting. They are persons who wish to witness the execution, and are enabled to do so by obtaining appointments as deputy sheriffs for the day. There is also a certain number sworn as the jury, to officially certify to the execution. Judges and other officials can attend by right or courtesy of their offices. A body of police always attends to preserve order, and, if any danger is apprehended, a company of military is also present. Consequently, the executions, though private as far as the general public are concerned, are not so as a matter of fact. The tops of the neighboring houses, and the neighboring streets, are always crowded with people, but they cannot see the execution. The prisoners in cells on the side of the prison where the gallows is placed, put pieces of looking-glass in the windows, and the terrible scene is reflected before their eyes.

Beekman stood beneath the gallows. He was bound, the rope about his neck had been fastened to another connected with the gallows, and the minister was uttering the last prayer.

"Have you anything to say?" asked the sheriff, in a low tone.

"Say to those beyond these walls that I died a brave man."

He stood erect, like a soldier on parade. He was pale, but his eyes were full of fire and life. The cap was now drawn down, and he saw the last of earth forever. Then the sheriff took out a white pocket handkerchief. This was the signal for the ropes holding the weights to be cut by the executioner, who was concealed in an upright box, near at hand. Up rose the doomed man; he struggled in the cords which bound him, a tremor passed through his frame, and soon all was over.

The law was vindicated and justice was satisfied. The body was given to the doctors. The name and crimes of Henry Beekman were now to pass from daily recital to the imperishable annals of the criminal records of the city of New York.

CHAPTER XXX.

SHARP SAM IN LUCK.

SHARP SAM became more calm and settled down after the trials, and particularly subsequent to the execution of Beekman.

"Now, you must go to school," said Mr. Worden about this time to Sam.

"That's what I want to do, sir," replied the boy cheerfully. "I know that I am awful ignorant and rough."

Soon after he became a pupil at a boarding school in Connecticut. It was an experience quite as novel to him as any that he had passed through. He showed great ambition to learn, but, for his age, he was very backward.

The other boys made fun of him on account of his backwardness. This made him unhappy, but he resolved to study all the harder. His frank, sincere nature won him friends, but, as is always the case in schools, there were others who annoyed him in every possible way that they could.

One afternoon it went beyond forbearance, and he pulled off his coat and dashed at the nearest of his tormentors.

The play-ground had never been the scene of such a fight before. Sam's blood was up, and from his earlier life in New York, he was prepared to strike skillful and powerful blows. It was not like the fighting of boys, but vigorous and desperate.

He knocked three boys down, struck several others, so that their noses began to bleed, and in five minutes every one of his enemies had been put to flight.

Sam, without a scratch, but with his clothes disarranged, and terribly excited, stood, surrounded by his friends, the hero and master of the play-ground. "Cowards!" he exclaimed in his fury; "what do you think of the ignorant New York boy now?"

After this he was never molested, but he became the pet of the school, and the champion in all cases of the weak against the strong.

He learned with surprising rapidity, and at the end of the first term took several prizes.

His style of speech was much improved. He had lost the mispronunciation and slang which were formerly so noticeable in him. He had grown, too, and, in all respects, had changed and improved.

Mr. Worden attended the public school exercises, and at their close said to Sam:

"I am proud of you to-day, Sam. You have shown that my confidence in you is not misplaced."

"I try, sir, to deserve it," returned the boy in a voice which faltered with emotion.

"You have many a hard task before you yet; but from what you have done at the outset, I know you will keep a determined will to the end," were the encouraging words of Mr. Worden.

"When I ran in the streets of New York a poor boy," said Sam, standing erect and looking Mr. Worden directly in the face, "I had no conception how ignorant I was, or of the benefits of study. Now, however, the darkness, as well as my degradation, have passed from me."

He had a fine head, and a ruddy, handsome complexion. The boy of the streets had been already transformed into an intelligent and attractive youth. He remained at the same school, which was a prominent and extensive institution, for a number of years.

As he grew older he experienced great mortification on account of his altogether unknown origin. Very frequently questions were carelessly asked on this subject, which gave him much pain.

"Oh," he would often say, "if I had a single clew to work upon, I am sure that I could find out something."

He wrote to Mrs. Miller, but she could give no information beyond the fact that she had found him abandoned in the street.

In all his life no one had ever recognized him, no one had claimed to have any knowledge about him. He asked himself if it could be possible that he was entirely cut off from his kindred; that in all the world there was no one that held the tie of blood to him.

These thoughts made him melancholy.

"Mr. Worden," he would say, "is very kind to me, but I long to know one human being whose blood and mine are the same."

In the world, full of its associations of kinship and affection, he was, as far as kindred were concerned, absolutely alone.

He was constantly on the alert to make some discovery in this direction. He formed a habit of scanning faces, and his ardent, imploring gaze seemed to say, "Are you not kin to me?"

He told Mr. Worden of his distress and his hope that some day the mystery of his birth would be solved.

"Such matters," said Mr. Worden, "are often cleared up in an unexpected and sudden manner."

"But, sir," remarked Sam, gloomily, "my identity has been lost. Who can recognize in me at this age the child which was abandoned in the street in New York? Even my true name is unknown. Here I go by your honored one, and who, if they knew of the circumstances which led to the abandonment of that child, would ever think of me in connection with the matter?"

"Great difficulty surrounds the affair," said Mr. Worden, "but remember that line of the good old hymn by Cowper, which says—'God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.'"

"True," said Sam, reverently, "and I will await His interposition in my behalf."

Another year passed away.

One day there came to the school, as a visitor, a lady who lived in the neighborhood. She was the daughter of a well-to-do gentleman, but there had been some peculiar circumstances attending her marriage, which had caused her to live in much seclusion. Some very fine astronomical apparatus had recently been provided for the use of the school, and she had come to see it. When she entered the room Sam was there with the Professor of Astronomy. This gentleman was acquainted with the lady, and, as soon as she entered, said:

"Mrs. Mott, do you know that I have always been struck with the remarkable resemblance which one of my pupils bears to yourself?"

"Indeed," said the lady, in evident surprise. "Who is he?"

"Master Sam Worden. He is now present, allow me to introduce him to you."

He called Sam and presented him.

"Why!" exclaimed the professor, looking from one to the other, "this is most extraordinary. The likeness is even more striking than I thought it was—every feature of both is the same."

The boy, pale and agitated, looked earnestly at the lady, and asked himself if it could be possible that the mystery of his birth was now to be cleared up.

The lady, even more agitated, said:

"Who is this boy?"

"The adopted son of Mr. Worden, of New York."

"The adopted son," repeated the lady, with emphasis, "do you know his history?"

"Can you answer that question, Master Worden?" asked the professor.

"I can, sir," replied the boy, trembling violently in his excitement. "I was found an abandoned child in the year 18—, in one of the streets of the City of New York. Some years ago Mr. Worden adopted me."

Mrs. Mott seemed about to faint. The professor gave her water, and opened a window.

"Madam," he said, "you seem greatly agitated."

"Is there any mystery here?"

"Years ago," she replied, "I was married to a man who proved utterly unworthy of me. I left

him, and returned to my father's house. One day he came here and kidnapped my child and took it to New York. I never was able to find either of them."

"Did it have any mark?" asked the professor, now also growing excited.

"It did—a large mole on the right shoulder."

"My mother!" screamed Sam, throwing himself into her arms.

"My son! my son!" exclaimed the other, kissing and caressing the boy.

"I have a mark of that kind," said Sam.

"God," said the professor, solemnly, "has set the image of each other in your faces—the proofs that you are mother and son cannot be questioned."

The news spread like wild-fire through the large school. The teachers attempted to keep the classes in order, but it was in vain. A recess for half an hour was taken, and the whole body of pupils went to the astronomy room to congratulate Sam and his mother. He was allowed to go home with her. When they left the building it echoed and re-echoed with the shouts of the teachers and scholars.

"At last, said Sam, 'I know who I am.'"

CHAPTER XXXI.

GENTLEMAN SAM.

WE pass over several years in the career of our characters.

Captain Miller had retired from the sea and purchased a farm on Long Island, where himself, Mrs. Miller and Walter were living in great happiness. The Captain owned a pretty yacht, in which he sailed on the great South Bay and sometimes took trips out on the ocean. Charles, now well grown up, had finished his education, and was in a lawyer's office in New York preparing for admission to the bar.

Mr. Vincent and his wife returned, after a year, from Europe, and took up their residence in a new house built by him on Fifth avenue. Several children were born to them, and Mrs. Vincent proved herself a model mother, while she always remained a leader in the fashionable society of the metropolis.

Mr. Worden was growing old—his formerly dark hair was now a beautiful silvery gray. But he was still hale, cheerful and happy. His wife was going down the hill of life joyous in the society of her excellent husband, and in the love of her daughter, her son-in-law, and her grandchildren, all of whom she idolized.

The discovery of Sam's parentage, and especially as it was of such a respectable character, had given great pleasure to Mr. and Mrs. Worden and the Vincents.

Mr. Worden refused to allow himself to be released from his engagement to educate Sam.

"No, my dear madam," he said to Mrs. Mott, who was urging it, "you shall not deprive me of that pleasure and duty. I find with every day that he holds a larger place in my heart, and it is a satisfaction of the most agreeable character for me to perform this service for him."

From this time the subject was dropped, and Mr. Worden was allowed to plan out the whole of Sam's educational course. When his studies at the Academy were concluded, he entered Yale College, in New Haven, and, at length, also graduated there with honor.

Before this it had been arranged that Sam was to go into commercial business in New York. He became the junior partner in a large grain and flour house.

His capital consisted of the money placed in the savings bank for him at the time of Miss Worden's marriage.

"Behold," said Mr. Worden to him when they went to draw the money, "the benefit of saving. By day and by night your money has increased, and now you have a handsome capital to begin business with."

Then there appeared in the papers this advertisement:

"COPARTNERSHIP NOTICE."

"Samuel Mott has this day been admitted as a member of our firm. WILLIAM YOUNG & Co. New York, January 1, 18—."

The portrait of Sharp Sam, as we drew it when we first introduced him to the reader on that rainy day when he crouched in the doorway would not do for him now. Then, everything was pressing him downhill, and he looked and acted like the vagabond which he was in condition and in feeling.

Now, he must stand before the reader quite a different person, so different, in fact, that it is difficult to realize that it is the same person."

He is a tall, handsome young man, dressed with much neatness and taste. Education and refined associations have changed him in every particular, and the sign of the vagabond on his brow has been obliterated by that of the gentleman.

He seldom speaks of his earlier life. It was marked by too many sorrows, by too much that was terrible, for him to wish to recall it.

And yet, in some things, he is unchanged.

He has the same love of justice and right, the same frankness and sincerity, and the same firmness and courage.

Among his duties as a member of the grain firm was that of going to the Produce Exchange every morning.

This is the place where all the grain and flour which is brought to New York from the West and other parts of the country is sold. When an exporter receives orders from his correspondents in foreign countries to buy grain and flour he does not go to the commission merchants, who are the daily receivers of both by the railroads and by canal-boats. He gives his orders to brokers, and they go, at a certain time of the day, to the Produce Exchange, where

are assembled representatives of every firm having grain and flour to sell, and there the purchases, to the extent of thousands upon thousands of bushels of grain and barrels of flour, are made.

The firms having ships, for which they wish freights, are also in attendance at the same place, and as soon as the grain and flour are bought, the freight room is secured for it, at the current market rates.

All the large business of New York, in different articles, is transacted at these exchanges, where the daily market price is established.

The Produce Exchange is composed of a large number of members, and they own an imposing and spacious building, in the lower part of Whitehall street. On the main floor each firm or individual is allowed certain drawers for samples, and, during change hours, the display embraces the entire stock on hand in the port of New York. When there is much of a rising or falling market, as, for instance, when they are speculating on war news from Europe, there is a wild excitement, and the transactions, in a few hours, amount to millions of dollars.

Sam, as a merchant, became quite prominent on the Produce Exchange. He seemed to have a natural taste for business, and his intelligence and shrewdness soon became well known in the market.

"How does my boy get on with you?" asked Mr. Worden of his old friend, the senior member of the firm.

"First-rate," replied the merchant; "he seems to be a born merchant. He is quick, accurate and bold, but judicious. He has made a reputation, already, among the merchants on 'Change, and, we think, we have a treasure in such a man as a member of the firm."

This intelligence made good old Mr. Worden fairly beam with joy. Then he stily added:

"I hear that he is very fond of the society of a certain member of your family—your beautiful daughter. I hope it may prove a match."

"He is welcome to her hand," said the father, "if he can win her. They are both God's own choice spirits."

Mr. Worden went up-town in a very happy mood. "There is one thing more I want to see," he said, "which is the marriage of Sam to a woman who will appreciate him, and make him happy. Miss Young is of the right stamp, and Mrs. Worden, and all of us, must encourage him in that direction. When he is married and settled down, I can then feel satisfied. No young man, in business or out of it, is safe in this city of temptations until he has a home of his own."

About this date, Sam had another adventure, which was something of the old style.

He was going from the Exchange to his office, with his head full of the extensive transactions which he had conducted during the morning. Suddenly he saw the fire-engines in the streets, and became aware that there was a fire. Still he did not pay much attention, but hurried along in the direction of his office.

In this part of the city, in the midst of the offices and warehouses, there are some very large tenement-houses. He had to pass some of them, and, to his dismay, he at length became aware that it was one of these which was on fire.

The management of the present paid Fire Department of New York is a very systematic affair. When a fire breaks out, a telegraphic signal is sent out to the engine-houses of the district, and in a few moments they are at the place and at work. No bells are rung, and there is none of the excitement among the people which, under the volunteer system, always took place at every alarm.

The fire of which we are writing, however, took place in the daytime in a business neighborhood, and there was a large crowd in the vicinity in a short time. Among those who ran to the spot was Sam.

"A tenement-house on fire," he said; "that is a bad thing. I hope they'll get the poor people out."

Memory was alive with him now. He was carried back to his own life in a tenement-house, and of that awful escape he made from the roof of one of them.

Smoke and flames poured out of the windows of the building, which was on a very narrow street. The wildest panic existed among the numerous tenants—male and female, women and children. Articles of furniture of every description were hurled from the windows, and, although the firemen and police implored these people to abandon everything and descend to the street, they still remained, and continued to throw out their effects.

The smoke became denser, and rolled in vast volumes through the narrow street, so that, at times, the whole building was hid from view by it. Then the lurid flames broke through it, leaping and roaring.

The police drove a mass of terrified people before them, and it was asserted that all had escaped from the burning edifice.

"My old man ain't down here," screamed a frenzied woman, wringing her hands. "I don't see him. The smoke must have overpowered him."

"Where was he?" demanded several.

"In the front top story room."

Every eye scanned the front of the burning building. Through the smoke the flames could be seen darting about in the interior, and spreading from window to window.

"No one can go in there, now," said a fireman, "any more than in a furnace."

While he was speaking, a man dashed toward one of the ladders. It was our own hero. He did not consider the danger—he only saw the weeping, imploring woman before him.

"Come down!" some shouted.

"Up! up! save the man!" cried others.

Through the smoke and flame, sometimes in sight and at other times completely hid from view, the strong, brave man made his upward way.

He reached the window of the room. He entered and dragged forth the body of a man. Then, with ringing shouts, others rushed up to his assistance, and the man, still alive, but insensible, was brought down to the street.

Cheers were heard above the roar of the flames from all who saw the hero's deed.

"Oh, let me thank him," cried the woman, "let me bless him."

But the blackened and singed hero had gone from the scene.

Great was the surprise of Sam's partners, when they saw him come in, and greater was it still when they saw the cheering crowds about their store, and were informed of the meaning of the demonstration.

The next day the papers were full of the affair, and of merited compliments upon the conduct of the rescuer. They did not know, however, that the merchant, Samuel Mott, was the Sharp Sam of whom so much had been printed in former times.

At the Christmas season following Sam was married to the wealthy and accomplished Miss Young, the daughter of his partner.

Mr. and Mrs. Worden and Mr. and Mrs. Vincent were present, and a great number of other fashionable people. Every one of the Miller family was in attendance.

"Now, my boy," said Mr. Worden, when he congratulated Sam, "you are in a safe port, at last, and your old friends need take no further trouble about you."

Here, too, we may properly close the story of his adventures. Suffice it to say, that he lived a long and honorable career as a New York merchant, and died leaving a fortune of more than a million of dollars.

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